*The Unworthy Non-Communicant.*

# A TREATISE

Shewing the

## Danger of Neglecting

The Bleſſed

# Sacrament

Of The

# Lords Supper,

AND

Rectifying the Miſtakes of many in This Age concerning it.

The Firſt Part.

**The Second Impreſſion Corrected.**

By *William Smythies*, the Morning Lecturer at Saint *Michael Cornhil*, London.

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TO THE

# WORSHIPFUL

*Richard Alie* Eſquire, Maſter.

Mr. *Edward Turgis*,
Mr. *Richard Dawſon*,
Mr. *Gilbert Urwyn*,
Mr. *Edward Thurſfield*, } Wardens.

Sir *Robert Clayton*,
Sir *James Smith*,
Sir *Thomas Gold*, } Aldermen,
Mr. *Thomas Tyther*,

And others of the Court of Aſſiſtants, of the Company of *Drapers*, *London*.

Honoured Sirs,

YOU have been pleaſed to heap ſo many of your Favours upon me *and mine*, that I cannot but take this little Occaſion to eaſe my Mind, by Complaining to

the World, that I never yet had the least Opportunity to express my Thankfulness; but however, it is some Satisfaction to me, that I have not ceased to Pray to God for You and your Families, in that Congregation in which you have been pleased to place me.

It was a very remarkable and unexpected Providence, which directed you to make Choice of me for the Morning Lecture, upon the Recommendation of my Two ever honoured Friends, Sir *James Smith*, and Mr. *Thomas Tyther*, considering the great Interests that had been made for other Ministers, better deserving, and better known in the City, in which I was then a Stranger.

By

By this I accounted my ſelf the more abundantly obliged to take Care, that I did not *Do the work of the Lord negligently*: And, that I might have the better Direction in it, you were pleaſed to Command, That ſo much of the Pious Will of Mr. *John Raney* ſhould be ſhewed to me, as related to the Performance of my Duty; and I hope it will not be Offenſive to you, if I ſhew ſome part of it to the World, as followeth;

——And further, That before the beginning of every ſuch Lecture on the Sabbath Day Morning in St. Michael's Church, the Lecturer, for the time being, do Reverently Read ſuch Good and Godly Prayers allowed by the Church of England, as hath been heretofore uſually perfor-

med. And my desire is, That the said Preacher and Lecturer in and by all his said Lectures and Sermons, do chiefly Aim at the suppressing of Sin, and building up the Kingdom of Grace in the Hearts of the Auditors: And that he shall, upon the first Sabbath Day Morning in every Month, being the usual Communion Day, Exhort his Auditory for the reverent and due Receiving of the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; and give such Godly Instructions and Directions for the same, as shall be most fitting for that Occasion.

When I had heard this part of the Will of the Religious Donor, I resolved, by the Grace of God assisting, that I would observe what he so piously required of me.

That I have made it my Business

ſineſs to ſuppreſs Sin, my Auditors can Teſtify; and that I have obſerved his pleaſure in Exhorting to the Receiving of the Bleſſed Sacrament, may appear to you by this ſhort Treatiſe; only with this difference, that I have made it the chief part of my Work every Month (with very few Intermiſſions) to Exhort my Auditors not to neglect it; becauſe ſince the Death of that Worthy *Benefactor*, the Sin of Neglecting hath abounded more than the Sin of Unworthy Receiving. I have, with a ſorrowful Heart obſerved, That all thoſe Sermons which are deſigned to direct and prepare the People to Receive the Holy Sacrament, have ſignified very little, becauſe there are but very few

few in this vicious and divided Age that do partake of it.

The good Success which I have had, (Praised be the God of Heaven for it,) and the continued Importunities of some, who had forsaken the Communion of the Church, and others who had forsaken all *Religion*, as to the Practice of it, but are now become very Constant, and I hope very pious Communicants, have prevailed with me to Publish those Arguments which I have been many Years insisting and inlargeing upon: And if they have the same Influence upon the Readers, which they have had upon the Hearers, it will exceedingly rejoyce me; And you will have the less cause to repent of your

Choice,

Choice, and be the more willing, that I ſhould ſtill perform that Service, to which I have no other Title, but the Continuance of your Favour and good Opinion of me: Which that I may deſerve, ſhall be the conſtant Endeavour of

Your moſt humble and faithful Servant,

*Cripplegate*, June 12th. 1683.

William Smythies.

# TO THE READER.

Reader,

I Hope you will Excuſe me, that I have diſappointed your Expectation, for I have diſappointed my Own. My daily and almoſt hourly Interruptions would not permit me to Tranſcribe the whole Copy, as the Printer earneſtly deſired, before I committed it to the Preſs: And the Truth is, I was unwilling to do it, for fear that a Review of what I had done ſhould alter my Mind, and fruſtrate the Deſire of my importunate Friends. By this, through my Unskilfulneſs in taking Meaſures, I have been forced to break off very abruptly, being Confin'd to a ſhort and cheap Treatiſe. After I had conſidered the general Pretences of Non-Com-

Communicants, *I intended to ſpeak of ſome particular Caſes, which I think to be of great Moment: The* Young Mans *Pretence, the* Poor Man's *Pretence, and the* Melancholly Man's *Pretence for Non-Communicating; which are all of them very deplorable Caſes. I intended likewiſe to have Treated upon another General Head, and that is,* The Vindication and Recommendation of the Way of Adminiſtration in the Church of *England; and to ſhew that it doth exceedingly tend to the Promotion of that true Piety and Holineſs, which all good Men do highly Contend for, and which is the great Deſign of the Bleſſed Sacrament. I have, of late, ſpent a great part of my Time and Thoughts upon this Argument, and have obſerved the Apoſtles Rule,* In meekneſs to inſtruct them that oppoſe themſelves. *But I need not trouble my Self or the World about a Vindication of the Church in any thing, becauſe it hath been ſufficiently done many Years ſince: And is again undertaken by many Miniſters of this*

*this City*, Men of very Great Eminency, *whose Books are not onely sufficient to satisfy all that are willing to be satisfied, but to make them Champions for the Church, as many good Men have been who were Disaffected to Her.*

*To this I adde a very earnest Request: If you have been mistaken concerning the Duty or Danger of Communicating, read with a desire to be satisfied: If you have lived a sinful Life, read with a Willingness to be Reformed, that you may neither be an Unworthy Communicant, nor an Unworthy Non-Communicant; and if you receive any benefit, give Praise to the God of Heaven.*

Farewel.

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# THE Unworthy Non-Communicant.

THE great Contempt that is caſt upon Religion in this Age in which we live, & eſpecially upon this great ORDINANCE of the Bleſſed Sacrament of the *LORDS SUPPER*, hath made all undertakings of this nature very ſeaſonable. I queſtion whether there was ever any people, of what Religion ſoever they were, that ever

 ſlighted

ſlighted any Inſtitution which they called Divine, as many thouſands of Chriſtians ſlight the Sacrament.

If there were no other Argument to convince Chriſtians of their duty to Receive, and the danger of Neglecting; the Cunning and Subtilty of the Devil, the great Enemy of our Salvation, by which he Cheats men in reference to this Ordinance, might be of great force.

If we had lived with our Saviour in the World, or with his Apoſtles after his Aſcention into Heaven, we could not have imagin'd, conſidering the plain words of the Inſtitution, and the obliging Circumſtances that accompanied it, and likewiſe the care and conſtancy of the firſt Chriſtians to obſerve it according to that plain Inſtitution, that ever there ſhould be a generation of Chriſtians in the World, who ſhould make any Diſputes concerning it.

Who could have thought, that there ſhould have been any Prieſts

or

or Ministers, who should have kept back half the Sacrament from the People, since we find that our Saviour gave the Cup to all those to whom he gave the Bread? And the Apostle tells the *Corinthians*, 1 *Cor.* 11. ver. 27, 28, 29. in three Verses together of their Receiving the Cup as well as the Bread; and in one of them, expressly requires that they should *Eat of that Bread, and Drink of that Cup*, ver. 28. And yet none will say, that the *Corinthians* were Priests or Ministers.

Who could have imagined, that ever there should have been such a non-sensical Conceit as Transubstantiation, which is contrary to the very nature of a Sacrament? It was very happy for the Primitive Christians, that there was no such Conceit known in their dayes; for if it had, it would exceedingly have hindred the propagating of the GOSPEL. If a Christian had come to a Heathen, and told him that a peice of bread after a few Prayers, is no

longer Bread, but the very Body of Christ his Saviour, and the Heathen had tasted of it, and found that it was nothing but Bread still, surely he would have tryed to laugh that Christian to death, and *to hiss him out of the World.* If the Heathens had heard any such thing, they would have concluded, That Christians were a sort of men, who were deprived of their Senses, and that all they said, concerning Christ's Miracles, and his Resurrection, his Ascention, and the power of the Holy Ghost which followed it, was as true as Transubstantiation. And if they had said that they eat their God, they would have concluded, That they deserved to be hated of all men, and to be devoured by wild Beasts (one of their Cruelties to the Christians) who devoured their God; Or else they would have desired that they might eat with them: for, they could be contented to tear him with their Teeth, to shew their

Hatred

Hatred againſt him and his Doctrine. Beſides, it is an inſignificant conceit, in that no man can imaginet, what good it could do him to eat the very Body of his Saviour.

Who could have Imagined, that amongſt the men of our own Religion, there ſhould be a generation that ſhould throw the Ordinance away as uſeleſs and inſignificant; pretending that they receive Chriſt in their Hearts, and therefore there is no need of the outward Act: As if none were to Receive the Sacrament, but thoſe that are Unworthy, ſuch as receive not Chriſt in their Hearts; Or as if thoſe to whom our Saviour gave it, who had forſaken all for his ſake, did not receive Chriſt in their Hearts: Or as if the Primitive Chriſtians, thoſe Holy and Bleſſed Martyrs, who were conſtant Communicants, did not receive Chriſt in their Hearts. But alas, theſe poor deluded Creatures are pufft up with a conceit, that they are more

holy than those Blessed Martyrs were, and that they know the mind and design of Christ better than they did.

But to come a little nearer to that which is my chief Design, Who could have imagin'd that ever there should be men that expect Salvation by Christ (such as have none of these Enthusiastick Whimseys) who should think it a very indifferent thing, whether they observe this Institution of our Blessed Lord, or let it alone, although Christ commanded that it should be Received?

There are too many amongst us, who are Unworthy Communicants, men that do not fear God, and walk in his wayes, who do not take care to keep their Souls pure and undefiled, for which the Blessed Sacrament was appointed. But there are a great many more, who are Unworthy Non-Communicants, who live in the continued Neglect of this great Ordinance; such as are so far from crying

ing as the Diſciples did, *Lord evermore give us this Bread*, that they concern not themſelves, whether they ever partake of it: And that is not all, but they think they do very well in it; that they conſult their own Safety, and befriend their own Souls, by abſenting from ſuch a dangerous Ordinance, as the Sacrament is. Nay, they do not only abſent from it themſelves, but either blame, or wonder, at leaſt, at them that adventure to come to it, as thoſe that know not what they do; and they account that thoſe Laws which require men to receive the Sacrament, are moſt Tyranical, and no more to be obeyed, than Edicts which ſhould command men, to damn their own Souls. Thus! thus! are men deluded by the Devil, and affrighted from that Ordinance, which if they rightly underſtood, they would not for all the World, live in the neglect of it.

We are offended at the Church of

*Rome*, as well we may, and pitty the People of that Religion, for being content with half the Sacrament; but what ſhall we ſay, when they tell us, that our people are content without any of it?

Had we heard our Saviours Inſtitution of it, with the moſt endearing and obliging circumſtances, *The ſame night in which he was Betrayed*, which ſhewed that it was his farwel-Gift or Token of his Love: Or had we lived in the firſt and pureſt Ages of Chriſtianity, and ſeen with what Conſtancy as well as Ardency, the Sacrament was Celebrated amongſt them; and if any by the cenſures of the Church, *were kept back from the Lords Paſſover*, what a dreadful condition of Fear and Horrour they were in; how they lay proſtrate at the Church-door, and begg'd with Tears and grievious Bemoanings the Prayers of the Communicants, that they might be Admitted again with them to the Lords Table, we would

would not have imagined, that ever there ſhould be a Nation, in which the Chriſtian Religion ſhould be profeſſed, that ſhould have thouſands in it, who had rather be without the Sacrament than have it: Who ſhould think that they can better be Saved without it, and that their Receiving of it, would rather endanger, than further their Salvation?

And if we conſider likewiſe, that our Saviours Inſtitution of it was after he had ſpent the laſt, and therefore we account it the beſt, part of his time in perſwading, and commanding his Diſciples to love one another, and to be *one as he and his Father were one*, which we may take as preparatory to his Inſtituting the Bleſſed Supper; and if to all this we add, how careful the Primitive Chriſtians were, to *obey them that had the Rule over them, and watcht for their Souls*, in obſerving thoſe Rules which they preſcribed for the Adminiſtration of the Sacrament (which

Rules

Rules are many of them obſerved in the Church of *England* at this day): It cannot but ſeem very ſtrange, and be very grievous to all good Chriſtians amongſt us, that there ſhould be ſuch cauſeleſs Diviſions, and Separations from this Bleſſed Ordinance.

To the end therefore, that men may not diſhonour their Profeſſion, nor be cheated of that Spiritual Food, which Chriſt appointed for the nouriſhing of their Souls to eternal Life, upon any pretence whatſoever, I earneſtly intreat, and beſeech all Non-Communicants, ſeriouſly and impartially to conſider theſe following things.

I. It is the great Duty, as well as the great Priviledge, of every Chriſtian, to Receive the Lords Supper.

It is our Saviours Command, *This Do*; and it is great and apparent Diſobedience in every Chriſtian, who

who *does it not.* I think it very neceſſary, that this ſhould be my firſt Aſſertion, becauſe the Practice of moſt men doth ſuppoſe, that every man is left at his Libery, and ought to be ſo; whether he will Receive it or not: And if he Receives not in a whole year, or many years; or not in all his life-time, or not till he is in his laſt ſickneſs (and then calls for it, not for any love that he hath to Chriſt, or any delight that he takes in the Ordinance, but to make an experiment, whether that will eaſe his tormented mind, when nothing elſe will) that in all this neglect he hath not offended God. That if he ſhould come to the Sacrament, he might have cauſe to repent; but his turning his back upon it, though never ſo often, *needs no Repentance.*

There are a great many, who if they are required to come to the Lords Table, anſwer, That they are not ſatisfied to Receive. But I would fain

fain know of those men, how they can be satisfied to let it alone and to to turn their backs upon it, when others under the same Obligations, do make their solemn Approach to it.

I am sure, there never was any Divine Institution, concerning which, the people under that Dispensation, thought they were left at their liberty, whether they should observe it or not. Every Male was Circumcised. Concerning the Passover, we read, *Exod.* 12. *v.* 28. *And the Children of* Israel *went away, and did as the Lord had commanded* Moses, *and* Aaron, *so did they.* It is strange to consider, how all the Ritual and Ceremonial Laws were Observed: That *Burthen which they were not able to bear*, they did not dare to throw off. And yet that the Blessed Sacrament of the Lords Supper, should be slighted, as if it were no Divine Institution, but only that which our Saviour mention'd, and left it to the pleasure of

of his Diſciples and Followers, whether they would obſerve it.

I can not Imagine, what expoſition the Non-Communicant can make of the words of the Inſtitution, *This Do in Remembrance of Me.* He can not but ſay, that it is poſitively Enjoyned, and he cannot but ſay, that it is of Univerſal Extent. Our Saviour did not ſay, you may do This in Remembrance of Me, if you pleaſe. He did not ſay, leſt the Beſt of my Diſciples do This, thoſe that are ſtrongeſt, and of the higheſt Rank, and let others omit it: That had been to leave both unſatisfied: The ſtrongeſt being humble and modeſt, would alwayes be ſuſpicious, that they had not Arrived at a Degree high enough, there being no Standard; and the weakeſt would be troubled, that they were not permitted to partake, and knew not when they ſhould. But he ſaid, *This Do*, without any Reſtriction or Limitation; commanding the Obſervance of it,

by all those who expect Salvation by His Death, and Sufferings.

Besides the Institution of it by our Saviour, that Admonition of the Apostle to the *Corinthians*, is very Observable, 1 *Cor.* 11. 28. *Let a man Examine himself, and so let him Eat of that Bread, and Drink of that Cup.* The Apostle doth not say, *Let a man Examine himself*, that he may know whether he shall Receive or not; That he may either Eat, or let it alone, according as he finds himself disposed in his own mind; If he be Religiously disposed, let him go to the Lords Supper, if not, let him stay away; But, *Let a man Examine himself, and so let him Eat*, &c. plainly intimating, that the Sacrament was an Ordinance, not to be dispensed with, but to be prepared for; and that no man, can satisfy his mind to neglect it, because he is Unworthy, but must prepare and partake of it.

I think I need not say any more, to

to ſhew, that it is the duty of every one, who calls himſelf a Chriſtian, to Receive the Bleſſed Sacrament. It will be only requiſite, that I ſpeak ſomewhat for the determination of one caſe, and that is, How often every one is Obliged to Receive? Becauſe, ſome may think, that unleſs they partake at every Communion, they are guilty of a ſin of Omiſſion; and if they ſhould, the Number of Communicants being very great, in ſome places, it is impoſſible to be performed. To this I may Anſwer, that in regard, our Saviour made no Determination in this Matter; It is requiſite, that every one ſhould take his Meaſures, from the appointment of the Church, and from his own particular exigences, and neceſſities.

At firſt, the Chriſtians met together, and received every day of the week, their Hearts were Inflam'd with Love to their Saviour, and they were in continued expectation, by Mar-

Martyrdome to be ſent to him. Afterwards, it came to four times in the week, beſides the Feſtivals. The appointment of our Church is, that every one ſhould Receive at leaſt three times in the year; and I conceive, that the monethly Adminiſtration of it, in great and populous Cities is, partly, that there ſhould not be ſo great a concourſe at the Feſtivalls, as that it ſhould be impoſſible to Adminiſter it to all at once, and much more, that thoſe who are zealouſly affected, and find a greater neceſſity than others do, of Receiving it often, might have the more frequent Opportunities: For, the reaſon why it is not Adminiſtred every Lords-day (as it was formerly, and for that reaſon, the Communion Service is ſtill continued in the Church when there is no Adminiſtration) is not becauſe Chriſtians may receive the Sacrament too often, but becauſe the Commonneſs of it, may leſſon that Reverence and Eſteem, which is to be had

had for that great and solemn Ordinance. It would be a happiness indeed, if from the number of Zealous Communicants, we should find it necessary to Administer the Sacrament every Lords-day.

II. The danger of Unworthy Receiving is not so great as many think it is, who flee from the Sacrament as that which would bring them into a very great, and irrecoverable danger. It is not an unpardonable Sin, but that which may be amended.

I mention this in the second place, for the satisfaction of those who are under such terrible fears of being Unworthy Communicants, that they Communicate not at all, which I am apt to think, is the common case of Non-Communicants in our Dayes.

These disquieting Fears, proceed from a mistake of two expressions in the Apostles Admonition to the Corinthians, 1 *Cor.* 11. 29. *For the that*

*eateth and drinketh Unworthily, eateth and drinketh Damnation to himself, not discerning the Lords Body.* They do not rightly understand what is meant by *eating and drinking Unworthily*, nor by *eating and drinking Damnation.* And for want of a right understanding of these Expressions, they start from the Sacrament, as if the Lords *Table were become a snare.* They are so affrighted, that Christs Command signifies nothing to them, nor yet the benefit which he declared to his Disciples they should receive by it. When they hear how former Ages frequented the Sacrament, they regard it not, but think that they have discovered a danger which their forefathers never found out. They think that they are in the surest way to Salvation, that come not to the Sacrament; and the seldomer that any one Receives, the less danger he does incur to himself. And from a mistake of this place it is, that many very Pious, & therefore Worthy Communi-

cants,

cants, come not to the Lords Table with that Joy and Alacrity of Spirit, which become the Welcome Guests of our Blessed and Bountiful SAVIOUR, but are oppressed with Fears and Terrours, as if they suspected their coming would be to their Prejudice.

As for the word ἀναξίως, *Unworthy*: The sense in which we commonly make use of it is a good interpretation of the Apostles meaning. We do not call a man Unworthy, because he hath not attained to any high Accomplishments; because he is of meaner or lower degree than others; nor do we call a man Unworthy, because of some Faults that he is guilty of, considering that *in many things we Offend all.* But we call him Unworthy, who doth a base Act from a base Design. We call him Unworthy who is a Dissembler, who pretends Friendship to another for his own ends, but it appears that he hath no real Kindness for him. He is Unworthy, who casts contempt upon him whom he ought

to reverence, and honour as his Superiour. In such a sense as this is we are to understand the meaning of the Apostle. He is an Unworthy Communicant, who pretends to be the Disciple of the Lord, and takes no care to keep his Commandments. He is an Unworthy Communicant, who pretends great honour and reverence for his Saviour and his Ordinances, and yet comes Unreverently before him, which was the *Corinthians* case.

For the right understanding of this word, no man must make the esteem which he hath for himself to be his Rule; for then we should conclude, that our Saviour made a Feast with a resolution that none should partake of it. The impenitent Sinners Guilt tells him that he is Unworthy, and the penitent Sinners Humility tells him that he is Unworthy; and so by consequence, none must come to the Sacrament. According to this Rule, the Apostle himself was an Unworthy Com-

Communicant; for he calls himſelf the *Chief of Sinners*. If this were the Rule, every man ſhould be a Worthy Communicant, according to the good conceit that he hath of himſelf. The boaſting Phariſee ſhould be Worthy, and the poor humble and penitent Publican ſhould be Unworthy.

It is great pity, but that every good Chriſtian ſhould underſtand the true ſenſe of the Word, becauſe, otherwiſe thoſe who are moſt Worthy, by reaſon of their great Humility, and ſelf-Abaſement, are moſt apt to conclude themſelves Unworthy. It had been great pity, that the Centurion ſhould have loſt his errand to our Saviour, becauſe, he accounted himſelf Unworthy that he ſhould come *under his Roof*. Our Saviour would have accounted it great pity, that the woman of *Cana* ſhould have been rejected, becauſe, ſhe accounted her ſelf as Unworthy, as *a Dog*. It is a great pity, that any humble Chri-

ſtian ſhould be kept from the Sa-
crament becauſe he thinks himſel
Unworthy of it; for, the ſenſe of hi
Unworthyneſs doth ſhew that he i
Worthy.

Thoſe who are under this miſtake
may be better Informed, by reading
the Form of Adminiſtration in our
Church. We do not come to the
Lords Table, and ſay, 'Lord, we
'have now gotten a great Conqueſt o-
'ver our ſins, we are now Arrived to
'a high meaſure of Grace and Piety
'beyond other men, and therefore
'now we account our ſelves Worthy
'Communicants, and ſuch as are fi
'to Sup with our Lord. But on the
contrary, *we acknowledge and bewai
our manifold ſins and wickedneſs, whic
we have grievouſly committed*; we ac-
knowledge, that *we are not Worthy t
gather the Crumbs under his* Table
*&c.* By which it appears, that none
are to Receive the Sacrament, but
thoſe that, in this ſenſe, judge them-
ſelves Unworthy of it.

That

That every one therefore, may have a right Notion of this Word, *Unworthy*: The Rule which they muſt judge by, is the Word of God. Every man muſt account himſelf Worthy or Unworthy to Receive the Sacrament, not according to what he thinks of himſelf, but according to what God's Word declares concerning him. They are Worthy, whom God accepts of, according to his Covenant of Grace, declared in, and by the Goſpel. He that is ſincerely Penitent, though he cannot think himſelf Worthy, yet, God declares him to be ſo; and therefore, he is a Worthy Communicant, and is offenſive to God and injurious to himſelf if he comes not to the Bleſſed Sacrament. He that ſincerely deſires, and endeavours to walk in the wayes of God and Religion, though by reaſon of his many failings in his Duty, he thinks himſelf Unworthy, yet, God accounts him Worthy,

and therefore, he ought to come to the Sacrament, and to come with great Joy and Alacrity of mind; and the Sacrament is very proper for him, becauſe, it is an excellent meanes to help him againſt that which troubles him.

There is a twofold Unworthyneſs; as to the Perſon, and as to the manner of Communicating. As to the Perſon, when he is in a ſinful and impenitent State, when he allowes himſelf in ſenſual Practiſes, and takes pleaſure in them, though he knows that he Acts contrary to the Command of Chriſt; either trying to ſatisfy himſelf with Atheiſtical hopes that there is no World but this, or elſe with the hopes of an after Repentance, which is the common ſnare of the Devil. This Perſon can not be a Worthy Communicant, for, he is at enmity with God in his mind: He is a Rebel againſt the Law of Chriſt, which his intention to repent afterwards, doth ſuppoſe. He is one who can-

not

not think himſelf welcome to Chriſt, becauſe, he will not ſuffer him to be his Lord *to Rule over him.*

There is Unworthyneſs likewiſe, as to the manner of Receiving, and that is, when a man doth not Receive with Reverence as becomes him, in that ſolemn Approach to God. This was a great fault which the *Corinthians* were guilty of, they came Unreverently and diſorderly to the Sacrament from their love-Feaſts, forgetting that they were not in their own Houſes but in Gods Houſe, and that they were not eating at their own Tables but at the Lords Table. This is the proper meaning of the Apoſtles expreſſion in the next words, *Not diſcerning the Lords Body*; an expreſſion which I have heard ſome Papiſts make uſe of, for their whimſey of Tranſubſtantiation, as if they Eat and Drank Unworthily who did not diſcern by Faith, that it was the very Body of our Saviour: but moſt certain it is, that the Apoſtle had another

nother meaning. The word διακρινω signifies both to discriminate and to sanctify; and so the propereſt Account that can be given of it is, that he who doth not Receive after a devout and religious manner, is Unworthy.

I hope I have said enough to take off the unneceſſary, and cauſeleſs fears of thoſe who are humble Chriſtians, & that they will not any longer give the Enemy of their Salvation this *advantage againſt them*, but that they will take right Meaſures, and be ſo far from keeping from the Sacrament becauſe they think themſelves Unworthy, that they will account it a good qualification for their Welcome at the Lords Table. Let ſuch perſons look into the Holy Goſpel, and they will find, that ſuch perſons as they are, were not only accepted of Chriſt, but highly commended by him, and therefore are the moſt Welcome Gueſts at the Lords Table.

The next thing to be conſidered, is,

is, what the Apoſtle means by *eating and drinking Damnation*; which is the affrighting expreſſion that makes thouſands afraid to Receive the Sacrament. The trembling ſinner is affraid that this brings men into the condition of thoſe who were guilty of the Blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt; that they have committed a ſin which ſhall never be forgiven them: That they having received Unworthily, are irrecoverably Loſt and Ruin'd. That they have ſwallowed down Poiſon to their Souls, and can never *vomit it up again.* And if theſe be the interpretations that ſinners make of thoſe Expreſſions, that it is very hard to ſay who is worthy to Receive; and yet if a man be an Unworthy Receiver he is from thenceforth in a ſtate of Damnation: It is no wonder that there are ſo few Communicants. That I may therefore rectify theſe miſtakes, I deſire theſe things may be conſidered.

1. It was not the deſign of the Apoſtle

Apoſtle by this Expreſſion, to ſcare the wickedeſt men amongſt Chriſtians from the Sacrament, but only that they might Repent and come to it. He did not ſuppoſe that what he ſaid he would make any afraid to perform their Duty in obſerving this Ordinance; nor had it any ſuch effect upon thoſe to whom he wrote this Epiſtle. He was a more faithful ſteward and Servant of Chriſt, than to do any thing with deſign, to diſcourage thoſe from coming to his Maſters Table, who were invited to prepare, & to come to it. If he had, he had been as Unworthy a Miniſter, as the worſt ſinner can be an Unworthy Communicant. It is of great moment, and may exceedingly tend to the ſatisfaction of the ſcrupulous, when they read the Scriptures, to conſider well what the deſign of the Pen-man is: for by this meanes they will prevent miſapplications, which are of very ill Conſequence.

2. The word which is tranſlated Dam-

Damnation, is κρίμα which ſignifies Judgment, and doth as well ſignifie any temporal evil which befalls men in this world as the puniſhment in the helliſh State. And ſo the meaning is this and no more: He that Eateth and Drinketh Unworthily offends God, and provokes the Judgment of God againſt himſelf.

3. The caſe of the *Corinthians* is to be conſidered, and that may tend exceedingly to the ſatisfaction of thoſe that are thus affrighted: 1. They had received Unworthily; but yet the Apoſtle doth not tell them that they are Damned, or that they are in a loſt condition, and muſt now periſh for ever; but Admoniſhes them to be more careful for the time to come, that they might come with better Preparation than they had before. 2. In eating and drinking Unworthily, they had eat and drank Damnation to themſelves in the Apoſtles ſenſe: They had eat and drank Judgment, as appears in the next Verſe.

Verſe. *For this cauſe many are weak and ſickly amongſt you, and many ſleep.* From which it is concluded, that God ſent a Plague at *Corinth* for their Unworthy Receiving. 3. It muſt be conſider'd, that the Apoſtle only blames the *Corinthians* for that Fault which they were then guilty of, which was their Unworthy Receiving. There were no Chriſtians in thoſe dayes that were Non-Communicants. They generally Valued the Sacrament above their lives, and an opportunity of receiving, though it were Adminiſtred every day in the week, above all the enjoyments of the World. There was therefore no occaſion for the Apoſtle to tell them the Danger of living in the neglect of the Sacrament: If there had, no Man in his Wits can imagine but that the Apoſtle would have threatned *Damnation* as well to Unworthy Neglecters as he did to Unworthy Receivers of the Bleſſed Sacrament.

4. If

4. If this which the Apoſtle ſaith of Eating and Drinking Damnation be the cauſe of Mens being afraid to come to the Sacrament, they may for the like reaſon, be afraid to perform other Duties of Religion.

If any Impenitent Sinner Prayes to God, without a reſolution to avoid the ſame courſe of Life, he cannot think but his Prayers will provoke God to puniſh him, rather then obtain favour to him: that he hath reaſon to expect that the Judgment of God, both in reference to this Life, and that which is to come, ſhould be the conſequent of it. He is one who confeſſeth his ſin to God, but doth not ſo much as intend to forſake it for the time to come: And this muſt certainly be a great Provocation of the All-ſeeing God; For a Man to pretend that he is ſorry for what he hath done, when he is not reſolved to amend.

If an earthly King could know that the Malefactor, who beggs his Life, inten-

intended to do the ſame wickedneſs for which he deſerved to dye before, he would be ſo far from granting his Petition, that he would haſten his Execution.

The Almighty God, the Great King of Heaven knows this to be the Sinners caſe, that although he ſtands condemned for his evil deeds, yet he beggs pardon, onely as a thing in courſe, without any reſolution of amendment; and can it be imagin'd that any thing leſs than Damnation ſhould be the end of this Sinner. There is one caſe in which the Sinner doth directly Pray Damnation to himſelf, according to the Apoſtles Phraſe, and that is the caſe of the Malitious and Revengeful Sinner, he Prayers to God *to forgive him his treſpreſſes as he forgives others:* That is not at all, It is as if he ſhould ſay, Lord be thou revenged on me, for I am reſolved to be revenged on my Brother: Beſides, there is no more cauſe of Terrour from this Expreſſion of

of the Apoſtle by which Sinners are ſcared from the Sacrament, than there is in that of *Solomon* by which wicked men may be afraid to Pray, *Prov.* 15.8. *The Sacrifice*, that is the Prayer, *of the Wicked is an Abomination unto the Lord.* He that doth that which God loaths, that which is an Abomination to him, certainly can expect nothing but *Damnation* to be the end of it. I would fain know of the Non-Communicant whether, if the Apoſtles expreſſion had been *He that Eateth and Drinketh Unworthily is an Abomination unto the Lord*, and *Solomons* expreſſion had been, The Prayer of the wicked bringeth Damnation to himſelf; that he would have Received the Sacrament, but never pray'd to God.

I may likewiſe inſtance in that great Duty of hearing Gods Word. Certainly every man will grant, that for a man to come to the Houſe of God, to hear what God requires of him, without any intent to do it, and

accordingly comes from hearing Gods Commands with a resolution to break them, can expect nothing less than *Damnation* to be the consequent of it. And although this be the case of thousands of Sinners, yet they are not afraid to hear Gods Word. There is no more cause of Terrour from this expression of the Apostle to Unworthy Communicants, than there is from many Expressions of our Saviour and his Apostles concerning Unworthy Hearers of Gods Word. I may instance first, in that of our Saviour, *Luk.* 8.18. *Take heed therefore how you hear; whosoever hath to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.* If our Saviour had onely given the Caution, *Take heed how you hear*, it might startle the unprofitable Hearer, and give him just cause to expect *Judgment* if he were not careful? But our Saviour adding, *For whosoever hath to him shall be given, and from him that hath*

*hath not, from him ſhall be taken away, even that which he ſeemeth to have,* is an expreſſion which ſignifies the condition of a careleſs Hearer to be ſo forlorn, that it may make every ſuch ſinner afraid to enter into Gods Houſe. The meaning of our Saviour by that proverbial ſaying is, He that is an Obedient Hearer ſhall grow in Grace and Knowledge, and be in the caſe of a Rich man who encreaſeth his Riches to a great Eſtate; but the careleſs Hearer who doth not give diligent Attention, and who comes to hear without reſolution to Practiſe, is like a man of low Degree who by taking no care to improve his Stock, loſeth that little that he hath, and comes to intolerable Beggary and Miſery. How dreadful is the Condition of that man, who may be ſaid to hear away all that is good? Who, the longer he Hears the leſs he Regards and the worſe he is.

I might inſtance likewiſe in the compariſon which our Saviour makes

between a disobedient Hearer, and the foolish man who built his House upon the Sand, *Mat.* 7. 26. of which he saith, *great was the fall of it.* We can not imagine the great fall of a Disobedient Hearer to be any thing less than a fall into Damnation and everlasting Misery: And yet men are not therefore afraid to hear Gods Word who refuse to do it. I may instance likewise in in the expressions of the Apostles; St. *James* saith, *Chap.* 1. v. 22. *Be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only deceiving your own selves.* How do men deceive themselves, but by expecting Salvation from Hearing, and Damnation must be their Portion for not doing. And yet the sinner doth not say, I shall but deceive my self, and therefore 'tis in vain for me to go to Gods House to Hear his Word. There is another expression of the Apostle; 2 *Cor.* 2. 16. *To the one we are a savour of death unto death.* The Apostle is speaking concerning the Ministry of the Gospel, and the different

different Effects which it hath upon men in reference to another world. *It is the ſavour of death unto death*; an expreſſion alluding to ſtrong perfumes which are pleaſant to ſome, but are like poiſon ſuddainly deſtructive to others. It is as if the Apoſtle ſhould have ſaid, Though to ſome our Preaching the Goſpel is exceedingly beneficial, yet to others who regard it not it is moſt certainly deſtructive, for it brings eternal Death. There is more terrour in this Expreſſion than there is in that of the Apoſtles *eating and drinking Damnation*; for that, as I have ſhewed, ſignifies any temporal evil as well as the Puniſhment of another ſtate; But this of the Apoſtle ſignifies only the Death of the ſoul in another world; And yet for all this men are not afraid to hear the Goſpel Preached to them. By this I hope it hath appeared, that there is no more reaſon why Chriſtians ſhould be afraid to Receive the Sacrament from that Expreſſion of

the Apoſtle, than they ſhould be to perform other Duties of Religion, conſidering what the Scripture ſaith concerning thoſe that are Unworthy Performers of them.

5. I may add in the laſt place That this Expreſſion of the Apoſtle, how ſevere ſoever it may ſeem to be, is no part of revealed Religion properly ſo called. Revealed Religion is that of God, which we could not know if it were not told us. But this of Unworthy Communicants eating and drinking judgment to themſelves, is that which the *Corinthians* and all Chriſtans might know, though the Apoſtle had never ſaid it. Every man by the light of natural Reaſon knows, that he who doth not live in obedience to the Laws of his God, or comes Unreverently before him, is not accepted of him; but on the contrary, doth provoke him to anger, and conſequently to puniſh that offender who doth thus diſobey and contemn him.

If Heathens had been negligent or unreverent in their Sacrifices, and a plague had hapned amongſt them, as it was ſuppoſed to be the caſe of the *Corinthians*, they would doubtleſs have concluded, that the Plague came becauſe of their Neglect of their Duty. And therefore it is a hard caſe that men ſhould be ſo much afraid of the Sacrament, becauſe they are told of a danger which Heathens themſelves might have known in the like caſe

'Tis very probable that the *Corinthians* were ſo apprehenſive of the infinite love of Chriſt, and of the benefit which was to be received by this Ordinance, that they were not ſo well aware of the danger of Unworthy Receiving as they might have been; and therefore the Apoſtle thinks fit to give them this Admonition, by which they might underſtand that, although the benefit was great to the Worthy Receiver, yet a Man muſt not be ſo

presumptuously confident of it, as to think that he may come to it without a due consideration of, and preparation for, such a near and solemn approach to God.

III. The danger of Unworthy Neglecting the Sacrament is generally greater than the danger of Unworthy Receiving. I know that this Assertion will seem strange to many and may be very offensive to some, who for many Years have heard the Duty of preparing mightily urged, but have never heard that it is a Duty to *partake*. They have heard the danger of Unworthy Receiving strained beyond its due bounds and limits, but have heard nothing of the danger of living in the continued Neglect of this Ordinance. But though I do not speak the Sense of a great many in this vicious and divided Age, yet I hope every one will grant that I speak the Sence of all Mankind in all former Ages, in reference to divine and positive

positive Institutions. Those, who of old were called Gods People, because they had entred into Covenant with him, had positive Institutions from God, which they were duly to observe, and to *sanctify themselves* for the performance of. We are not to imagine that they thought their external Sanctifications were enough, but that there must be an inward Sanctification of the Heart, to which the other did relate. And although they were defective in this, as appears by the great complaints which God made against them, yet they did not dare to neglect the Observance of Gods positive Institutions; but all the people were careful to do what God commanded as to the outward Act, though they were negligent as to the inward disposition of their Minds and preparation for it. When our Saviour came into the World, the Passover was duly observed by those whom he condemned as the worst men in the world, but yet he no where

where tells them that they ſhould not have obſerv'd it, or that it had been better that the Ordinance had been wholly laid aſide. *Though all were not* Iſrael *that were of* Iſrael, yet all accounted it their Duty to obſerve the Ordinances of *the God of Iſrael.*

If we likewiſe conſider the Practice of the firſt Chriſtians, we ſhall find, that they accounted Non-Communicating to be the greateſt danger. If they had accounted that there was leſs danger in being Non-Communicants, or that they might have been very good Chriſtians though they did not Receive the Sacrament, or that it would be no great danger to their own Souls to live in the Neglect of it, they would not have lain proſtrate at the Church Doors, begging the Prayers of the Faithful, that they might be admitted to the Sacrament; but have liv'd very contentedly without it, as a great many do in our dayes, who it may be will ſay,

ſay, that it was the Ignorance of thoſe Chriſtians which made them ſo fondly deſirous of it. Excommunication, by which they were debarred from coming to the Sacrament, would have been no trouble to them, but they would have lived very contentedly without it. Beſides we find that when the *Corinthians* had received Unworthily, the Apoſtle charges them *to examine themſelves*, that they might be better prepared; but afterwards, when Chriſtians began to be ſo remiſs as not to receive at all, it was determin'd in a Council at *Antioch*, That all Non-Communicants ſhould be Excommunicated; they were not thought worthy of the name or ſociety of Chriſtians, who ſhould turn their backs upon the Holy Ordinance of the bleſſed JESUS, as if it were unneceſſary to obſerve it. Doubtleſs the moſt wicked Chriſtian in the World will not be puniſhed for coming to the Sacrament, ſimply conſidered, but becauſe he did not prepare his Mind by leaving

leaving off his wickedneſs. He did that which was required of him, as to the outward Act onely, he did not take care to prepare himſelf for it. But more particularly.

1. Non-communicating is a more manifeſt contempt of the Authority of God. A Law-giver is exceedingly deſpiſed when his Lawes are not obſerved. It is an Argument that his Authority is diſputed, or that thoſe whom he commands are not obliged to obey him. Who can imagine that the Uuworthy Non-Communicant ownes that God hath exalted Chriſt *To be a Prince and a Saviour*, and that he *hath given him a Nome above every name*, when he turns his back upon his Inſtitution, as if it were ſome Uſurper that hath ſaid *Do this*, and one whom Men need not own as their *Prince*, and as their *Saviour?* This is ſuch a contempt of Chriſt's Authority, and ſuch a reproach to the Chriſtian Religion, that I may ſay *Tell it not in Gath*, &c. Let not the Heathens

thens hear that Chriſtians have ſo littlc regard to their Chriſt, as that they do not obey him in that Command which had a ſpecial Relation to what they ſay he did for them. They have more reverence and ſhew, more regard and obedience to their *Gods which yet are no Gods*, as appears by the account we have of their Sacrifices. Let not the *Mahometans* hear of it: They are diligent to obſerve the commands of their *Mahomet*, in abſtaining from what he hath forbidden, and in their Religious Duties, praying five times every day, becauſe they ſay that he had Authority from God, and what he commanded they are obliged to do. Tell it not to the *Jewes*; they obſerve the Ordinances of *Moſes* to this day in many things, becauſe they own his Authority from God: Theſe Men of other Religions ſhame Chriſtians, and may conclude if they hear of Non-Communicants, That there are many who call themſelves Chriſtians, who do not believe

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in their Hearts that their Chriſt came from God; for they do not account themſelves obliged to obſerve his Rites and Inſtitutions. This contempt of Chriſt's Authority cannot be ſo deeply charged upon the Unworthy Receiver. That Servant who is not careful to do his duty after ſuch a manner as his Maſter requires of him, is not ſo guilty of contempt, as he that turns his back, and doth not do it at all. That Chriſtians, becauſe Chriſt requires them to be Chriſtians indeed, his Diſciples, and becauſe they are threatned with Puniſhment if they are not careful to perform their Duty as they ought, and as they may do, ſhould think to avoid Puniſhment, by not doing their Duty at all, is ſuch a way to avoid Puniſhment, as no Man ever yet thought of, and nothing but the deluſion of the Devil could ever put into the Minds of Men.

2. It is a greater contempt of the love of Chriſt. The love of God the Father in ſending Chriſt into the World

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is unconceivably great: God ſo loved the world, ſo infinitly, ſo tranſcendently, ſo beyond all that Tongues can expreſs, or Hearts conceive: And Chriſts giving his Body to be broken, and his Blood to be ſhed, is ſuch an expreſſion of Love, as is only fit to put us into an Extaſy of Admiration. The Apoſtle tells us that it hath *length and breadth, and depth and heighth*, and that it is a *love which paſſeth Knowledg*. A love which can not be deſcribed, and therefore God allows us an Eternity to admire it in: That God ſhould become Man, that *He* ſhould Die to whom it belongs to give Life, that he ſhould Die for *Enemies*, that He ſhould Die ſuch an ignominious Death as the Death of the Croſs, *&c.* Now we muſt know, that this Sacrament is an Ordinance which Chriſt appointed on purpoſe to give us a lively Remembrance, and a ſymbolical repreſentation of that unconceivable Love: And although the Unworthy Communicant is Unworthy

worthy indeed, in that it hath not ſuch an influence upon his Life as it ought to have, yet in regard that he comes to the Sacrament, and by his outward reverence doth acknowledge Chriſts Love to Sinners (and it may be hath grief in his heart at that time to think that that love hath not obliged him to better Obedience) he is not ſo much to blame as the Non-Communicant who turns his back upon the Ordinance, as if Chriſts love Exhibited and repreſented by it were not worthy of his notice.

3. They caſt great contempt upon the Wiſdom of Chriſt, who frequent not the Bleſſed Sacrament. Their Neglect of it ſuppoſeth that they think there is no great need of it, or no great good to be received by it.

There are a ſort of People amongſt us, who upon all occaſions declare that they hope to be ſaved, who yet think they need not Receive the Sacrament; And what do

do theſe men leſs than charge Chriſt, that this Ordinance, which he appointed as a means to Salvation, might as well have been let alone. It is through their own great Folly that they call the Wiſdom of him who is *the Wiſdom of God* into queſtion; their not conſidering that the good that is to be Received, is only from the Bleſſing of Heaven upon that Ordinance which Chriſt appointed. The Non-Communicant in this caſe is like *Naaman* the Leper, 2 *Kings* 5. 10. 11. who was willing to go to the man of God to be recovered of his Leproſy; but he was deſirous that it might be done without his uſing any Means for it; eſpecially ſuch as he could not underſtand ſhould afford him any benefit. Eliſha *ſent a Meſſenger unto him, ſaying, Go and waſh in* Jordan *ſeven times, and thy fleſh ſhall come again unto thee, and thou ſhalt be clean.' But* Naaman *was Wroth, and went away, and ſaid, Behold, I thought, he will ſurely come out to me,*

*and ſtand, and call on the Name of the Lord his God, and ſtrike his hand over the place, and recover the Leper. Are not* Abana *and* Pharpar *Rivers of* Damaſcus, *better than all the waters of* Iſrael? *May I not waſh in them and be clean? So he turned and went away in a Rage.* In like manner the Non-Communicant knows no reaſon, why he ſhould go to the Sacrament to be cured of his *Leproſy*. It is enough, he thinks, that Chriſt died for Sinners, and that he believes it, and that he is ſorry for his Sins and asks God Pardon, or intends to do ſo: He knows no need of the Sacrament, or to what purpoſe it was appointed. But as *Naaman* kept his Leproſy till he was perſwaded to waſh in *Jordan*; ſo Sinners have all the reaſon in the world to expect, that the Leproſy of their Souls ſhould continue till they frequent the Sacrament, it being an Ordinance which Chriſt appointed, and therefore they have no reaſon to expect the cure of their Souls without it.

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The Unworthy Communicant acknowledges by his devout Receiving of it, that it is an Ordinance of Heaven, worthy of all Reverence (though he fails in examining himself before he comes to partake of it) and that from which great benefit is to be expected; but the Unworthy Non-Communicant slights it as inconsiderable and unnecessary to be observed. And every one knows that in so doing he calls into question the Wisdom of our Blessed Saviour.

4. Non-Communicants are worse than Unworthy Receivers, in that they cast away the profession of Christianity, and that Publick Declaration of the benefit of the Death and Sufferings of Christ, for which this Ordinance was appointed. When our Saviour said, *Do this in remembrance of Me:* And the Apostle, *As oft as ye Eat this Bread, and Drink this Cup ye do shew the Lords Death until He come*; or καταγγέλλετε, declare ye the Lords Death. It is very plain,

that the Sacrament was not only intended for the private good and benefit of the Receiver, but to bear up the honour of God and the Christian Religion in the World: That it ſhould be uſed for a publick Declaration, that Chriſt is the Saviour of the World, and that there is no other Name under Heaven by which a man can be Saved: That his Death and Sufferings was the expiatory Sacrifice for the Sin of the whole World: And that thoſe who have not the Goſpel Preached, but have only the guide of their own Conſciences and of natural Religion, are ſaved by vertue of his Death, though they do not know him; becauſe that it is by him that Gods Anger is appeaſed towards Mankind. By this we *ſhew forth the Lords Death*, what a great and mighty Saviour he made himſelf by dying for Mankind.

The Unworthy Receiver is exceedingly to blame becauſe he failes in the Practice of Religion: But the Non-Com-

Communicant is more Unworthy, for he failes not only in the Practice, but in the very Profeſſion likewiſe. It were not improper to ask him when he turns his back upon the Sacrament what Religion he is of, that we may give an account to them that ask us? If he ſaith a Chriſtian, why doth he not own it by his ſolemn Approach to that Ordinance which Chriſt appointed for that very end? If he ſaith he goes to Church, ſo may, and ſometimes do *Jews* and *Mahometans*, men of other Religions.

5. Non-Communicating is of more dangerous and pernicious Conſequence than Unworthy Receiving. It is not onely in many reſpects more offenſive to God, but likewiſe more deſtructive to the Souls of men. This may appear by a more general or a more particular and ſpecial Conſideration. Non-Communicating is the great Inlet both of dreadful Diviſions and horrid Debaucheries; which with ſorrowful hearts we have great cauſe to complain of.

It hath been the great Inlet to all manner of *Diviſions* by which the Church of Chriſt, which is his Body, is torn Limb from Limb, and, we fear, is never like to be healed in our daies. The caſe is plain though there were nothing of ſad Experience to be alledged.

So long as men keep in ſocieties, though but civil Societies, and are Obliged to obſerve Rules and Orders: If any Controverſie ariſie, the diſſatisfied perſon, partly by his obligation to thoſe rules and orders, and partly by the advice and councel of the reſt of the ſociety, doth not preſently ſeparate but ſubmit; or if he be ſtubborn and inſolent he may be turn'd out of the Society, and be liable to ſevere penalties, till he be more modeſt, humble and compliant. But if he thinks himſelf under no obligation to obſerve the rules and orders of that Society, and no penalty be inflicted, then he breaks away and makes Parties and brings all into confuſion and diſorder.

In

In the caſe of the Sacrament: If every one, who is admitted by Baptiſm to be a member of the Church of Chriſt, doth account it his duty as a member of that Society, to obſerve the rules and orders of the Church, Peace and Union is maintain'd; but if men think they are not oblig'd, but wholly left at their liberty whether they will partake of this Ordinance or let it alone, then it's no wonder if the members of that ſociety be Scattered into as many diviſions and parties, as the great Enemy of the Sacrament and of their Salvation pleaſe.

For many years after our bleſſed Reformation from Popery, there were ſo many received the Sacrament, that the number of inhabitants in every Pariſh was beſt known by the number of Communicants. In thoſe happy dayes of the Churches peace, Maſters and Miſtreſſes came at one Communion, & their Servants after publick Catechiſing and private Examination

by their Miniſters, came the next Communion. It could not be Imagined but that there were ſome Unworthy Communicants amongſt them: There were ſuch in the Church of *Corinth*, and will be in all Churches to the end of the World. But that Evil was nothing in compariſon of the miſchiefs that have happen'd ſince men took their Liberties and forſook the Sacrament. Pariſhes now may better be computed by the number of Non-Communicants, and thoſe that run from the Sacrament, rather than of thoſe that come to it.

I cannot in this place forbear mentioning the ſubſtance of what I lately heard from a very Aged, Grave, and Pious Perſon, who is now very conformable to the Church of *England*. We were lamenting that the people would not be perſwaded to come to the Sacrament, and that their abſenting was occaſion'd by the ſad Diſtractions and Diviſions that are in the Church: 'I was, ſaid he, one of

'thoſe

'thoſe who in the begining of the late 'troubles found fault with the Sur-'plice and with the Croſs in Bap-'tiſme, and there were others who 'were diſcontented at thoſe things, 'who were good and holy men. But 'I am confident, if they could have 'foreſeen the dreadful miſchiefs that 'have happened unto the Church, 'they would never have ſo much 'as opened their lips, much leſs have 'done any thing againſt the Church 'as it then was.

I know there ought to be great care taken to keep off ſcandalous Communicants, and there would be greater care taken if the Diviſions of the Church did not hinder it. But I think all ſober People will ſay, that if all the vicious men in *England* came to the Sacrament, it would not be ſo great a ſcandal to Religion, as the dreadful Diviſions and Separations that have been in the Church, ſince the People took their liberty to turn their backs upon that holy Ordinance, and many Mini-

Miniſters made it their buſineſs to make them afraid of it, by Preaching the danger of Unworthy Receiving, but not of Unworthy Neglecting of it.

Another great Evil which is the Conſequence of Non-Communicating is horrid Debauchery and Prophaneneſs; ſuch as never was or could be whilſt the Sacrament was Frequented. There are thouſands in this age who call themſelves Chriſtians, and often ſay that they *hope to be ſaved*, but are ſo far from living like Chriſtians, that they would be abandoned by ſober Heathens as unfit for Humane Society. If we look into the Records of antient times we ſhall find, that though there were grievious Wickedneſſes & Impieties, yet they were attended with ſome kind of fear and ſhame; but in our age Wickedneſs inſults, as if it hoped to have a better reputation than Piety and Vertue in the World. The Apoſtle ſpeaking of the ſins of Heathens *Eph.* 5. 11. calls them the *Unfruitful Works of Darkneſs*. And in the next

Verſe

Verſe he tells the *Epheſians*, that *it is a ſhame to ſpeak of thoſe things which are done in Secret.* But in our age wickedneſs appears Openly, as if there were no fear or ſhame that belonged to it.

In former times they that were *drunk were drunk in the Night*, but now tis Scarcely accounted a ſin, and therefore is become a Noon-day Entertainment. In former times it was the ſin of a rude ungovern'd Rabble. When *Hannah* was falſely accuſed of being drunk, *count not*, ſaid ſhe, *thine handmaid for a Daughter of Belial*; *Belial* ſignifies *without Yoak*, and it is as if ſhe had ſaid, I am none of thoſe unruly forlorn Miſcreants that will be drunk. I ſuppoſe the proverb may be very antient *As drunk as a Beggar.* But now tis the ſin (if I may be ſo bold as to call it ſo) of Lords and Gentlemen, and is in as much Eſteem amongſt too many of them, as if it were ſome brave Atchievement, for which a man is willing to adventure the Ruine of himſelf and family.

Whore-

Whoredome is another ſin which hath exceedingly abounded. It is an Old ſin, but the Impudence that attends it is new. In *Jobs* time *the eye of the Adulterer waited for the twilight*, Chap. 24. 15. The Whore which *Solomon* ſpeaks of, *Prov.* 7. 9. was only to be found *in the Twilight*, *in the Evening*, *in the black and dark night*, and ſhe was accounted to have an *impudent face*, *v.* 13. But how impudent are thoſe Whores who appear in the open ſtreets at noon day, tempting all that paſs by to their filthy Embraces? Wee read in the Scripture of the *Attire of a Harlot*, but now there is in this immodeſt age no diſtinction; but by the *ſhew* of women wee may ſuſpect that the Attire of Harlots is all the faſhion.

Theſe two Sins have of late years ſo much abounded, that there are thouſands who are ſo far from living like Chriſtians, that they are degenerated from the common Principles of Humanity, and would be a ſhame to Heathens if they lived amongſt them,

them. These sins have made many to become worse than beasts in the esteem of all that are vertuous. And I am sure they have made them become Devils to themselves and families.

There is another dreadful Sin which abounds, and that is profane Swearing. A Sin which men commit only because the Devil will have it so; for there is neither profit nor pleasure in it. Some are seldom guilty of it but when they are provoked to Anger, and then they must be revenged by abusing the name of God & destroying their own Souls: which lets us see what fools the Devil makes them that forsake Religion. Sometimes it is attended with mirth and jollity; Laughter and Swearing go together, as if to abuse the Holy Name of God were a help to Mirth. But the reason of it is this, the Devil will not have his servants to have innocent Mirth; if they should, their Damnation would not be encreased as he would have it upon all occasions.

Some-

Sometimes we observe men swearing in their ordinary Converse as if it were a grace to their speech: Of which the truest account that I can give is; that their Hearts are so full of Wickedness, & of contempt of God and of Religion, that it continually, as a thing in course, runs out at their Mouths.

I may add another Impiety which doth exceedingly encrease, and that is Contempt of Religion upon the Lords Day. Men of other Religions may call it the Devils Day, considering what horrid Wickednesses men are guilty of on that Day. He hath more service done him on that day than in all the week besides. 'Tis become the Ale-house-keepers Market or rather Fair-day. If Christians should regard their Souls on that day, they could not pay their Rents.

These Wickednesses and many more have abounded since the days of Non-Communicating. If these Ungodly Wretches had not turn'd their backs upon

upon the Sacrament at first, when they were of years in which they might have been capable of Receiving it, and the Church requir'd it; if they had been under a Neceſſity of receiving it; no man can imagine that they could have been guilty of ſuch horrid Sins, and have lived ſuch wicked Lives. 'Tis poſſible that they might have been in a ſinful State, and ſo have been Unworthy Communicants, and thereby have eaten and drank *Damnation* to themſelves; But now they do moſt apparently damn their own Souls to the bottomleſs Pit of Deſtruction, and they damn the ſouls of others; and in a ſenſe they may be ſaid to damn all Religion.

If theſe profligate Wretches were ſtrictly required to come to the Sacrament, they would be under a Neceſſity of reforming that they might be admitted to it. There would be an Admonition from the Miniſter. There would be terrible Checks from their

their own Conſciences, which the Sacrament would rouze and cauſe to terrify them. And if after (upon their promiſe of Amendment) they are admitted to the Sacrament, they ſhall return to their former courſes; Other Communicants would take notice of them, and give them friendly and godly Admonitions, and if thoſe prevail not, they would at length complain to the Church, by which they ſhould be forced to live better, or be abandoned the ſociety of Chriſtians. But when men turn their backs upon the Sacrament, they are then ſtrangers to their Neighbours, or at leaſt, there is no acquaintance with them as they are Chriſtians. They are little or nothing concern'd with one another in the things of Religion. And if they are reproved, they anſwer to the Reprover, that he is nothing concern'd with them; which they could not do if they Communicated together at the Bleſſed Sacrament. There is a great complaint of

of Unworthy Communicants (and I hope it is greater than there is Cauſe for:) But what a fearful cauſe is there to complain of the Unworthyneſs, of the horrid and ſhameful Wickedneſſes of Non-Communicants?

The conſequence of Non-Communicating may come likewiſe under a more ſpecial Conſideration. There are Thouſands that are not openly ſcandalous and profane, whoſe condition would not be ſo bad as it is, if they frequented the Sacrament. There would not be ſo much guilt and trouble in their minds when they are in health, nor ſo much fear and diſquietment when ſickneſs comes. This is a plain caſe, and almoſt every days Experience proves the truth of it. Let every man who lives in any known Sin examine his own Mind, whether, if he were under a neceſſity of Receiving the Sacrament, he would not be more afraid to commit that Sin; whether he would not be more afraid to neglect his Duty to God both in publick and private?

And when he hath Received after a ſolemn and devout manner, and know that he muſt ſhortly renew his engagement to God again; He would not be more careful of his wayes? I know there are a great many who are afraid to come to the Sacrament; but if they Examin themſelves, and ſeriouſly conſider the ſtate of their own Minds, they will have cauſe to conclude, That it is from a ſuggeſtion of the Devil, and that he makes them afraid to Receive, that they might be the leſs afraid to ſin. He may be Unworthy who does Receive, he may be one that lives a ſinful Life; but we have much more cauſe to think him Unworthy and in a ſinful ſtate, who Receives not at all.

There is likewiſe a more dreadful Conſequence, in reſpect of Grief and Sorrow when the Non-Communicant is ſick, and forc'd to look back upon his former Life; which I have had ſuch frequent occaſion to take notice of, that I viſit the Sick with ſome kind

of

of Fear, leſt I ſhould find their Neglect of the Sacrament tormenting their Conſciences. I never yet heard any ſay, that they had damned their Souls by Receiving the Sacrament; although I muſt confeſs I have heard ſome lament, that they did not come to it ſo qualified as they might have done. I never yet heard any ſay, I wiſh I had never received the Sacrament; although in ſome caſes, as I ſhall ſhew, there may be cauſe for Perſons to wiſh ſo. But, that Men and Women have not received, is the Torment of their departing Souls; becauſe then their guilty minds tell them, that they ought to have received it, and might have done it to their great Benefit and Advantage. I lately heard this Expreſſion from a Sick bed, which I mention becauſe I think very uſeful. 'As for the Sacrament I was afraid in 'my health to receive it, but I think 'if I had received it, I ſhould have 'been more careful of my wayes than 'I have been. We do for the moſt

part find, that Persons are Comforted or Tormented upon their Sick-Beds, according to their Communicating or Non-Communicating in the time of their Healths. I know not which is more rare, in visiting the Sick, to find a Communicant troubled in mind, or a Non-communicant that is not.

There is another dreadfull Evil which is the consequence of Non-Communicating, (which I might have mentioned under the former head) and that is most gross and scandalous Ignorance. There never was any Age in which there were Ministers more able to instruct the People, and it is well known their way of Preaching the Gospel is most plain and intelligible to the meanest Capacities. And yet *The People perish for want of Knowledg*. In many places, by reason of the vast number of Inhabitants, it is impossible there can be a particular care of their Souls by Converse with them in Private, which is

is of great neceſſity and benefit; and there are a great many who would not endure it, but take occaſion to run from the Church. In the mean while there are thouſands who have lived long enough to be *teachers of others*, but had need themſelves to be taught *which are the Firſt Principles of the Oracles of God*; Men that can give no Account of their Faith, nor upon what Account it is that they expect Salvation. And I am ſure one great Cauſe of this, hath been Neglect of Receiving the Lords Supper. For if men were frequent Communicants, they would be under a great Neceſſity and Obligation to enquire after Truth, that they might underſtand, at leaſt, the Principles of their Religion. They would be ſenſible of their Ignorance, and come to their Miniſter, or Converſe with other Communicants concerning the things of God and of Religion. The Sacrament would be a Means by which they would *grow in Grace and Know-*

*ledge.* But whilſt they are only concerned to come ſometimes to the Houſe of God, and think that it is enough that they have been there, though they neither know nor Practiſe more than they did before; and neglect that Solemn Inſtitution, which would make them more deeply concerned in the things of Religion: they remain moſt groſly Ignorant. I do not think that any man will ſay, that the frequent Communicants are as Ignorant as thoſe are, that never come to the Sacrament.

By this time I hope I have ſufficiently proved my Aſſertion, *viz.* That there is generally more danger in Unworthy Neglecting, than there is in Unworthy Receiving; and therefore the Sinner is not ſecure, unleſs it be in his Sin, who turns his back upon this Ordinance from a ſuppoſition that he avoids danger, or that of two Evils he doth chooſe the leaſt: Yet I am not willing to paſs to another head of Diſcourſe, till I have earneſtly

eſtly intreated all Perſons, that they would not make an ill Uſe of what I have ſaid. As the Apoſtle never intended, by telling the *Corinthians* the danger of Unworthy Receiving, that any ſhould abſent from the Sacrament; So far be it from me to deſign by ſhewing the danger of Unworthy Neglecting, that any ſhould come unworthily to Receive it. There is no Need, nor any Reaſon, for ſuch an ill Inference to be made from it. Beſides I have only aſſerted that it is GENERALLY more dangerous. I do not ſay that it is ſo in every Particular Caſe. It may be there are ſome who come to the Sacrament on purpoſe to carry on wicked Deſignes, that they may be accounted not only Upright towards men, but likewiſe Religious towards God. 'Tis poſſible, there may be ſome who come to the Sacrament, that they may covertly carry on Treaſonable and Rebellious Deſignes; but I am loath to ſuppoſe that there are

any ſuch who are no friends to Popery. If there be, it had been well for thoſe *Judas's* that they had never been born, and it would be well for the world too if a *Milſtone were hanged about their Necks, and they were caſt into the Sea.* Or it may be there are ſome who come to the Sacrament, that they might be thought fit to be intruſted with the Concerns of Others, and in the mean while intend to cheat them. No man can think, but it had been better for ſuch men if they had never come to the Holy Ordinance: Whether their Deſignes be againſt publick or private Perſons, (though the firſt is the moſt dreadful Caſe) It was not Chriſt and his Commands, but the Devil and his Inſtigations that brought them to the Sacrament, and from him they muſt expect their reward in the place of Torments.

There is (beſides open debaucheries) another particular Caſe, which renders the Condition of men ſo bad, and is in ſome

ſome the Occaſion of ſo great a ſcandal to Religion and to the Holy Ordinance, that I will not ſay but it had been better if thoſe that are Communicants had never been ſo; And that is, That men ſhould Receive the Sacrament only for the ſake of their Employments, and that they may keep places of Truſt, which are profitable and beneficial to them. Chriſtians are to receive the Sacrament, becauſe it is an Ordinance which Chriſt Commanded; but theſe receive it not upon any ſuch account. So long as it was only the Command of Chriſt, they regarded it not; but when it became the Command of the King they made haſt to it.

Chriſtians are to receive the Sacrament for the good of their immortal Souls, that having begun a Religious Life, they may grow in Grace, and be more and more confirm'd and ſtrengthned in the wayes of Religion and of Godlineſs. But this is none of their buſineſs: Theſe men come to

to the Sacrament about a buſineſs in which their Souls are nothing concerned. And well it were for them if their Souls could be nothing concern'd in it. He that will be a Worthy Communicant, muſt Examine himſelf, whether he can be content to forſake the World, and all the Enjoyments in it for the ſake of Religion? He is a Worthy Communicant indeed, who is ſatisfi'd, that the Love he hath for his Saviour is ſuch, that he had rather quit the World and all the Enjoyments of it, than live without this Ordinance. But this man, upon Examination of himſelf, finds, that inſtead of being willing to forſake the World for the Love he hath to the Sacrament, he could be very well content to forſake the Sacrament, if it were not for the regard that he hath to the World.

If, when men are under a Neceſſity of receiving the Sacrament, that they may continue in Places of Profit as well as Truſt, they take this opportunity to Examine their own

Minds,

Minds, Whether they are in the number of thoſe that fear God, and ſincerely minde the things of Religion, and find that they might have been Worthy Receivers, and that it hath been their great fault, that they lived in the Neglect of the Sacrament, which hath been the Caſe of many? Or if upon Examination they find, that they are impenitent Sinners, that have allowed themſelves in ſins, either of Commiſſion or Omiſſion, and do reſolve that for the time to come, *Sin ſhall not have Dominion over* them, but they will every day Pray to God in their *Cloſets*, which our Saviour requires every one of his Diſciples to do; and that they will attend the Prayers of the Church with Devotion, and the Reading and Preaching of the Word with honeſt Hearts? If they are truly penitent for their former ſins, and reſolve to avoid the Occaſions of Evil for the time to come? If in order to theſe things they go to their own Miniſter

or

or to ſome other, whom they may think more fit to give them Advice (which the Church allowes, becauſe it is a very tender Caſe;) And if they reſolve that they will be frequent Communicants for the time to come? They may then bleſs God for that happy occaſion of bringing them to the Sacrament. But if men are Communicants only for the ſake of worldly Profits, I will not ſay, but it had been a leſs evil to have lived in the Neglect of it; It being a great Affront to our Bleſſed Saviour to come to his Supper for the ſake of this world; a great Contempt of the Ordinance, and of very ill conſequence to others, who will by ſuch Examples be brought to a very low Eſteem of it.

But may it not be Objected, That it is therefore a very grievous thing that the Sacrament ſhould be impoſed? Is it not that which tends to the diſhonour of Religion, and the prejudice of mens Souls?

*Anſ.*

*Anſ.* I know this is Objected, and there is a fearful Stir about it amongſt men of diſcontented Spirits, who cry, "What have Governours to do to de-"prive me of the liberty of Receiv-"ing then, and then only, when I "find my ſelf moſt fit for it? Why "ſhould it be required that All ſhould "come to the Sacrament, when it is "not to be imagin'd, but moſt are "unfit for it? Can it be ſuppoſed, "that All men have true Grace in "them? Do All belong to the Elecți-on of Grace? Theſe and ſuch like Queſtions we meet withal. But I do earneſtly deſire the Reader, to conſider in the firſt place, who they are that are thus offended. I have known none, or very few, but thoſe who Receive not at all, who make this Cavil. And the truth is, there is more Reaſon why we ſhould pitty and pray to God for them, than that we ſhould otherwiſe regard what they ſay. They have two very pernicious deſignes in it; One is to indulge

dulge their Luſts, which make them afraid to Receive the Sacrament, any where; The other is, to do miſchief to the Church; for they do thereby endeavour to exaſperate others againſt a lawful Command, that they might ſeparate from her Communion.

That the King may Command his Subjects to Receive the Sacrament, is ſo reaſonable, that I wonder any ſhould offer to Object againſt it. I ſhould think him very Arrogant, who ſhould ſay, that although Chriſt ſaid, *This Do*, yet Chriſtian Kings and Princes are not at all concern'd to ſee it done: That although Kings under the Old Teſtament-Diſpenſation, were favoured or rejected of God, according to their Care, that the people ſhould obſerve the Ordinances of God, or their Neglect in that great Concern; yet under the New-Teſtament-Diſpenſation, Kings are not to be concern'd whether the Ordinances of Chriſt be obſerved; but are to leave every one to their liber-

ty.

ty. I could almoſt as well ſay, that *Conſtantine* was to blame for ſetling Chriſtianity in his Dominions by a Law, as that Chriſtian Kings in ſucceeding Ages are to blame for taking Care, that the Ordinances of that Religion ſhould be duly obſerved. If any ſay, that the King muſt then Command the Receiving it after the manner that our Saviour preſcribed; I anſwer, that that Objection will only ſerve to throw the Ordinance out of the World; for neither Chriſt nor his Apoſtles preſcribed any way. But more of this under another Head.

As to what is ſaid concerning the Qualification of Perſons, That all have not the grace of God, All are not of the number of the Elect, *&c.* I ſhall give no other Anſwer but this. When there comes a man to me and tells me, that he is required to Receive the Sacrament, and in order to it he hath ſtriven againſt his Luſts with his utmoſt diligence: He hath implored

ted the Grace and holy Spirit of God with the greateſt earneſtneſs, and yet he is forced to continue under the power of his ſin, and muſt eat and drink his own Damnation: I will then conclude, that the Objection is of great force; but till then I wiſh that all perſons would take care of paſſing ſuch a Conſtruction of obſcure places of Scripture, as ſhall make them contradict the plaineſt Expreſſions of it, and the Experience of every man that comes into the world.

This Objection being anſwered (for the ſake of which I have made an unwonted Digreſſion) let me deſire every one who is required to Receive the Sacrament, as a Teſt to prove, that he fears God and is fit to be entruſted, take heed that what I have ſaid concerning the great Danger of Unworthy Neglecting, do not encourage him to go to the Sacrament without due Examination and Preparation for it. I would be very loath

loath to be the occaſion of his Death-bed anguiſh of mind, when his departing ſoul ſhall be full of horrour to think that he is going hence, and muſt appear before the Judgment Seat of him whom he regarded not; but for the ſake of this preſent World.

It muſt likewiſe be conſidered, that I have been ſpeaking of thoſe who live in the Neglect of the Sacrament, and not of thoſe who ſeldom Communicate. I know it is the great fault of Chriſtians in this age, that they do not Communicate ſo often as the Reverence which is due to the Ordinance, and the Neceſſities of their Souls do require. But their fault is not to be compared to the fault of thoſe who live in the continued Neglect of it. I have no deſign to extenuate the danger of Unworthy Receiving in any: For although I have I hope, made it appear, that the danger of Unworthy Refuſing the Sacrament is the greateſt; Yet when I conſider what a fearful thing it is for Sin-

ners, who do not fear God, and favour the things of Religion, to come as the true Disciples of Christ, to this Ordinance; I scarce know how to say that their danger is less. Let not therefore an ill use be made of what I have said, but let every one conclude, having often heard the danger of Unworthy Receiving, and now read the danger of Unworthy Neglecting; That the Sacrament is a great and solemn Ordinance which lies in the sinners way to stop him in his *broad way that leadeth to destruction*, and is a great argument to him to enter into *the path of Life*. For it is on one hand a dreadful thing, that the Children and Servants of the Devil who yeild Obedience to him, should come to the Lords Supper amongst those that are the Children and Servants of God, as if they could come undiscovered to the All-seeing God: That those whom Christ calls *his enemies*, because they *will not suffer him to Rule over them*, should come as if they were his Friends and

and Subjects. And on the other hand for men to turn their backs upon this Ordinance for the ſake of their Sins, and thereby to throw away the great Inſtitution of him from whom they declare that they expect Salvation: This admits of greater aggravations. Let every one therefore reſolve that he will avoid both theſe Rocks, by betaking himſelf to the ſincere Practice of Religion, and by frequenting this Holy Ordinance, by which he will enjoy great Pleaſure and Satisfaction to his mind in this world, and obtain good Aſſurance of everlaſting Glory and Happineſs in the World to come.

IV. The Non-Communicant is Unworthy in that he doth not only caſt Contempt upon the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, but upon the Sacrament of Baptiſm likewiſe, and ſo both the poſitive Inſtitutions of our Saviour are inſignificant and of no account to him.

The two Sacraments have a ſpecial relation to each other. The Lords Supper is a high Priviledge which Chriſtians have valued above their lives. It is the Souls *Feaſt of Fat Things*. It is that Spiritual Banquet with which our Saviour entertaines thoſe who are dearer, than his Life was, to him. Baptiſm is the Ordinance which opens the door and lets us in to the Banqueting-houſe: None but thoſe who are Baptized are to be admitted to the Lords Supper. If then the Non-Communicant regards not the Lords Supper he doth not regard but ſlights his Baptiſm, at leaſt, ſo farr as it hath relation to it. He that ſlights the Feaſt, muſt needs ſlight that which gives Admiſſion to it. The Sacrament of the Lords Supper is a renewing of that Covenant which we made with God in our Baptiſm; and is not only a renewed Engagement on our parts to *Believe in God and to Serve him*, but on Gods part likewiſe by which he ſeals to us the Forgiveneſs of our ſins, that

that we are *his Children and Heirs of Eternal Life.* If we care not for renewing this Covenant, it is a ſign that we value not the firſt Agreement that we made with God in our Baptiſm. Beſides, the Sacrament of the Lords Supper is a great means for our obtaining Grace to enable us to keep the Covenant of our Baptiſm. If we come not to it, 'tis a ſign that we have no mind to perform what we promiſed, which of our ſelves we are not able to perform.

Were it not a little beſides my preſent purpoſe, I could eaſily ſhew that thoſe who are Non-Communicants, if they had not been Baptized in their Infancies, would never have received that Ordinance. No adult perſon can be admitted into the Church of Chriſt by that Ordinance, who doth not own the Faith and Solemnly engage to live as becomes the Goſpel. And thoſe that perform this which Baptiſm engages men to, are Worthy Communicants.

If we ask the Non-Communicant how he came to be called a Christian, he must say, 'My Father made me 'so when I knew not what was done, 'and he or others promised that which 'I never intend to perform.

I would argue thus with the Non-Communicant. Either you own your Baptism or you do not? If you do not, why do you not declare it? Why do you call your self a Christian, and profess that you expect Salvation from him, who appointed that Ordinance to all that expect to enter into the Kingdom of God? If you do own your Baptism, why do you not take care to perform that reasonable and necessary Engagement which you made in it, by going to the Sacrament of the Lords Supper for Strength and Power to perform it?

But I had rather make another digression, which I hope the Reader will excuse, considering that it may tend to the satisfaction of many who are in doubt concerning Baptism, as it is now

now generally uſed in the Church of Chriſt. As there are a great many whoſe Practices ſhew, that they make no great account of their Baptiſm, ſo there are a great many whoſe Principles are utterly againſt it, and eſpecially againſt Infant-Baptiſm. And in regard that the practice of the Church depends more upon Grounds and Reaſons from Scripture, than from any Expreſs Inſtances in it; and there are ſome places which ſeem, to ſome, rather to ſpeak againſt it than for it, and to diſallow of it rather than to commend the practice of it; I ſhall for the ſatisfaction of thoſe who encline to the Anabaptiſts, and are willing to be ſatisfied (ſuch as have not taken up an Opinion and are reſolved to ſtick to it what ever any ſay againſt it; which is the great Cauſe of all errours) lay down theſe following Aſſertions, which I deſire all ſuch perſons ſoberly, and with humble and modeſt, and not with haughty and ſtubborn minds to conſider.

1. Children were members of the Jewiſh Church as well as Adult Perſons, and there was an Ordinance appointed for them which was their great Priviledge: And it is not to be imagined that our Saviour, who *took little Children up in his arms and bleſſed them*, ſhould allow no Ordinance for them by which they ſhould be admitted into his Church.

Whereſoever God entred into Covenant with the Parent, he entred into Covenant likewiſe with the Children of that Parent, that is, the Children were included in the Covenant, and the Bleſſing of that Covenant belonged to the Children as well as to the Parent

2. Our Saviour took this Ordinance of Baptiſm from the Cuſtom of the Jews, who were wont to Baptize thoſe who forſook Heatheniſm and embraced the true Religion: And whenſoever they made Proſelites, they did not only Baptize the Parent but the Child likewiſe, upon engagement that

the Child ſhould be brought up in the ſame Religion: So that it was not neceſſary, that our Saviour ſhould give an Inſtance of that which every one to whom he came knew was practiſed, But it was neceſſary that he ſhould have declared his Exceptions againſt Infants Baptiſm if he intended their excluſion.

To what purpoſe ſhould our Saviour declare, that Infants ſhould have the Seal of a Covenant, when 'twas never otherwiſe? Or, how can we imagine, that our Saviour ſent to Baptize Nations in which Infants had been commonly Baptized before, and yet intended that they ſhould be excluded? If indeed our Saviour had declared that Infants ſhould not be Baptized: Or if we had read of the Apoſtles Refuſal of them: Or if there had been no Infants Baptized before nor any Ordinance for Infants; the Anabaptiſts opinion had been built upon a good Foundation, but otherwiſe 'tis very weak.

3. As

3. As a conſequent of this, Infants were all along Baptized in the Primitive Church, by the Holy Martyrs that Suffered for Chriſtianity, of which thoſe who write againſt the Anabaptiſts have given undeniable proof. And we are ſure, that if our Saviour had intended their Excluſion, they would never have done it. And it is not to be imagined, that Anabaptiſts know better what was the Mind of Chriſt than thoſe Chriſtians did. If thoſe who are now of that perſwaſion had lived in thoſe dayes, and had conſidered from whence our Saviour took that Ordinance, with the Grounds and Reaſons of it; they could not have been of that Opinion which they have now eſpouſed; becauſe then the Original of it was freſh in the World, and the Uſe and Practice of it was continued by the moſt Holy men in the World. It is not only great Haughtineſs of mind, by which men think themſelves wiſer than the moſt Holy and Learned men in all ages of the World, but Igno-

Ignorance through length of time that makes an Anabaptiſt.

4. Infants are Believers in a ſence or elſe they could not be ſaved, nor have any right to the promiſes of Chriſt in the Goſpel. And if they are in any ſence ſuch Believers as are entituled to Salvation, they are ſuch Believers as have a right to Baptiſm. If the Eſtate belongs to a Child in the Cradle, the Indentures and Seals of that Eſtate belong to him likewiſe. The Child of a Believer may as well be called a Believer, as the Child of a Proſelite was called a Proſelite. If God gives Children but the Denomination of Believers, it is ſufficient to entitle them to Baptiſm.

5. Thoſe that conſider the Caſe of the Anabaptiſts muſt needs be of another Opinion. This in conjunction with the former Arguments muſt needs be of great force to thoſe that are ſerious and conſiderate, and not conceited and reſolute in a caſe which they have eſpouſed.

As

As the condition of the Jews is a living Argument of the Truth of Chriſtianity, and the badneſs of their caſe: So I may ſay, that the Condition of the Anabaptiſts and their Unſucceſsfulneſs in all their attempts to eſtabliſh their Opinions doth ſhew, that God doth not, nor ever did ſhew any ſuch Favour to them, as might give any ſober perſon cauſe to think that they were Gods Church and People, however they plead his Word to be their Rule; but that Infant-Baptiſm is an Ordinance which God allows of and hath countenanced ever ſince there was any oppoſition made to it.

There is a Writer yet alive who gives a large and ſtrange account of the miſchievous Practices of the *Anabaptiſts* in *Germany* and other places, what Diſturbers and not Promoters of Religion they have been whereſoever they have come. But I wave all that can be ſaid againſt them either in this Nation or beyond the Seas, and will only ſay, That if I had

had the higheſt Opinion of them for their Morals that I have for any ſort of men in the World, yet I could never believe, That all the Primitive Chriſtians who owned and practiſed Infant-Baptiſm, and the Martyrs in all Ages, were not Members rightly admitted into the Church of Chriſt: That not only the Papiſts, but all the Reformed Churches in the World, are miſtaken in this point; and that the *Anabaptiſts* are the only True and Rightful Members of Chriſts Body. He muſt be very weak and notorouſly partial, who conſiders theſe things, and doth not conclude that they are a Sect that Separate from the True Church which God hath owned in all Ages, and not the True Viſible Church of Chriſt. This I thought fit to mention in Conjunction with other Arguments, by which many wavering minds have been eſtabliſhed in the Truth; and God grant there may be the like ſucceſs to thoſe in the like caſe, who ſhall read them.

V. Thoſe

V. Thoſe Excuſes which men generally make for their not Receiving, are ſo far from Juſtifying their Neglect, that they do not ſo much as extenuate it: Nay, they exceedingly aggravate the Guilt of moſt Non-Communicants. The Truth is, no Excuſes muſt be made in ſuch a weighty matter as the Sacrament is. There may be Interruptions, but there muſt be no Excuſes. An Interruption is when a man really intends to receive the Sacrament, but ſomewhat happens by which he is prevented, and it is a great trouble to his mind that he is ſo. It is with Chriſtians in this caſe, as it was with thoſe *Iſraelites* which we read of *Num.* 9. 6, 7. who being hindred from eating the *Paſſover* by the legal defilement of a Dead Corps, were extremely troubled and came to *Moſes* to know what they ſhould do. *There were certain men who were defiled by the dead body of a man that they could not keep the Paſſover on that day: and they came before* Moſes *and before* Aaron

Aaron *on that day*; *And thoſe men ſaid unto him, we are defiled by the dead body of a man: wherefore are we kept back that we may not offer an offering of the Lord in his appointed Seaſon, among the Children of* Iſrael. Obſerve how farr thoſe men were from making Excuſes for neglecting Gods Ordinance, in that they were extreamly troubled at an interruption which probably they could not help; for he that was in a Tent in which a man dyed, or came into it, was unclean, *chap.* 19. 14. and continued ſo *Seven-days*. This being of great moment, *Moſes ſaid unto them, ſtand ſtill and I will hear what the Lord will command concerning you.* And we read that God in that Caſe appointed that they ſhould keep the *Paſſover* the next *Month*. God allowed of the Interruption for that time, but there muſt be no Excuſe. We read *Num.* 9. 13. that the man who was not thus hindered, if he did not keep the *Paſſover* at the time appointed, *The ſame ſoul ſhall be cut off from his*

*his people, becauſe he brought not the Offering of the Lord on his appointed Seaſon.* A place of Scripture very fit for *Non-Communicants* to conſider, who if they have no Impediments will make Excuſes inſtead of them, they will pretend ſomewhat to be the cauſe of their Neglect which is not really the cauſe; but the little regard which they have for the Ordinances of their Religion is the cauſe of their Neglect. I ſhall firſt conſider what the General Excuſes are, and then conſider ſome more ſpecial Caſes.

1. Some pretend that the Solemnity of the Ordinance is the cauſe of their Neglect: It is a very great Ordinance and they durſt not adventure to make their approach to it. I know that there are ſome very good Chriſtians to whom this is not an excuſe, but is a real Cauſe of their abſenting from the Sacrament. They think that it is too great an Adventure for ſuch as they are, to come to their

their Lords Supper, although they are ſuch as love him and do ſincerely deſire and endeavour to keep his Commandments. What I have already ſaid, may give ſatisfaction in this Caſe, *viz.* That Humility and a Senſe of Unworthyneſs is a good qualification for a Communicant; and that as the Sacrament is a great and Solemn Ordinance, ſo it is a very great Duty to partake of it; and therefore Chriſtians muſt take care that they do not complement our Saviour, but that the examine themſelves, and reverently obſerve his Inſtitution. Great men do ſometimes allow of ſuch excuſes when they make Invitations, but the Great God commands when he invites, and there can be no Neglect but it is a great ſin, as I have already ſhewed.

But this is not the Caſe I have now in hand: My deſign is to ſpeak of thoſe who make this a Pretence for their Non-Communicating. They ſay the Sacrament is a ſolemne Or-

dinance, and therefore they dare not come to it. But I would have such persons to consider, whither they go when they turn away from this Solemn Ordinance. If it be to their Lusts, and a continuance in a sinful course of Life, their condition is unspeakably miserable. What an Affront is this to the Great God and our Blessed Saviour? I may say to them as the Apostle to the *Galatians*, *Be not deceived God is not mocked.* The best that can be said, is; That you do very reverently mock Christ and his Ordinance: You are afraid to come to such a Solemn Ordinance, and you are not fit for it, and therefore you rather choose to live in the breach of his Commandment, which you find your selves more fit for: This is *Hail Master*: This is to Crucifie Christ from a Reverent respect to him. And as he is guilty of great Contempt of God under a pretence of Reverence to him, so he is guilty of most prodigious Folly. *O foolish* Non-Communicants *who have bewitched*

*bewitched you*, that you ſhould think to avoid danger by neglecting a great and Solemn duty; that you ſhould turn from the Sacrament to the Commiſſion of ſin *to avoid Damnation*! The Scripture ſaith *He that comitteth ſin is of the Devil.* The Non-Communicant abſents from the Ordinance of Chriſt, & goes to the Service of the Devil to avoid *Damnation.*

All men ſhould conſider, that the Solemnity of the Ordinance is as well a great Reaſon why men ſhould partake, as it is why they ſhould prepare; becauſe it is an Argument that God expects the Obſervance of it, and that his heart is the more ſet upon it. When Servants are negligent of their Duty, they hope to come off beſt by neglecting that which they think to be of leaſt moment. No man ever ſaid, I omitted my Duty, and I hope to be excuſed becauſe it was a great Command, and I was required to take great care in the obſervance of it. Let not any therefore think, that the Solemnity of the Ordinance will be their

excuse for not observing it, but that it will be their great Condemnation.

2. A second Pretence, which is a consequent of the former, is, That men are not prepared for it, and therefore they had better let it alone. I earnestly desire such persons to consider that,

1. This can be no Plea, because they may be prepared if they please. I know that there are a great many who would charge the sin of Non-Communicating upon Almighty God, pretending that he must prepare them for it; or else they cannot receive worthily. But let me tell the sinner, that his Contempt of God which brings *destruction* to him is *of himself*. Though no man can be prepared without the grace of God and the assistance of his holy Spirit, yet this is not the Cause of his being unprepared, for God hath promised his *Holy Spirit to them that ask it*. And the Experience of every sinner, who is not

not ſtrangely hardned in his impiety, tells him that in this he doth exceedingly provoke God; becauſe he knows that God is ſo farr from being wanting to him, that he doth ſecretly ſollicit him to prepare, that he may worthily partake, and he will not. That ſinner is in a very evil condition, who charges God of requiring that of him which he can by no means perform.

2. Your not being Prepared is of it ſelf a ſin, and therefore it muſt not be pleaded for a neglect of your Duty. This is to excuſe one ſin with another. It is as well a Duty to prepare as to partake, and the Neglect of it is a ſin which God doth as ſurely puniſh, Luke 12. 47. *That Servant that knew his Lords will, and prepared not himſelf, neither did according to his will, ſhall be beaten with many Stripes.* The man in the Goſpel that came to the Feaſt *without the Wedding Garment* was *Speechleſs.* No man muſt plead Unpreparedneſs; becauſe he may be

pared, and it is his ſin if he be not.

3. This is is a meer Deluſion of the Devil, by which he would keep men ſecure in a ſinful courſe of life. This is not an Unpreparedneſs which brings grief and trouble to the mind, as it ought to do; but it is a *contented* Unpreparedneſs. *The People love to have it ſo.* He that ſearcheth the heart knows that the Language there, is, I have no mind to be prepared; and that renders the condition of the Non-Communicant to be very dreadful.

4. This Pretence is endleſs. Art thou Unprepared, when will it be otherwiſe? The longer that any one Neglects the Sacrament, the more Unprepared he is for it. There are many, who when they were young pleaded they were not prepared, are prepared now; but it is to ſcoff at Religion, and to contemn all that is Holy. And thoſe that are not openly Prophane are more unprepared than they were, by an encreaſe of the

Love

Love of the World, and the fixing of Evil Habits. The Sacrament is an Ordinance which comes to pluck up Sin at the Roots, and if that be kept off, Sin muſt needs grow apace. He that being deſired to receive the Sacrament pleads that he is Unprepared, may as well ſay that he never intends to receive, for he is more Unprepared now than he was formerly, and is like to be more Unprepared for the time to come than he is now.

But it may be ſome will plead, That though every one may prepare, and it is his Duty ſo to do, and his Sin if he do not; yet the caſe of many is ſuch that they cannot find Time to prepare: There had need be ſome dayes ſet a part on purpoſe for Preparation: What ſhall Servants do that work all the week from Morning till Night, & have no more than time enough for the neceſſary ſupports of Nature, that are forced to riſe early and go to Bed Late? And what ſhall thoſe do that have nothing but from hand to mouth,

muſt they for the ſake of the Sacrament ſuffer their Families to want? To this I muſt anſwer; that every man hath or may have Time enough to prepare without any prejudice to his Worldly affaires; though the Servant doth not ſteal time from his Maſter, nor the poor man from the neceſſities of his Family, and that may appear if we conſider.

1. That which beſpeaks a man to be a Worthy Communicant, is not ſo much his particular Acts of Piety and Devotion, as the general Habit and Bent of his Mind. The great Queſtion is, whether a man really fears God, and whether he be Spiritually minded? He that lives in known ſins without Repentance and Amendment of Life, and intends to continue ſo, cannot be prepared for the Sacrament, though he ſpends never ſo much time in Religious Duties; becauſe he himſelf is not Religiouſly diſpoſed. If a man ſhould for many Days and Weeks abſtain from Sinful Acts which he hath been Guilty of, and

and if he ſhould ſpend as much time in Religious Services both publick and private as preparatory to the Sacrament, without a Reſolution not to return to the ſame courſe of Life again, it would not render him a Worthy Communicant. This were but for a Child of the Devil to dreſs himſelf in the counterfeit habit of Gods Children, and then to return to his Father again. This is a moſt certain Truth; He that is Religious and Fears God in the General courſe of his Life, is more fit to receive the Sacrament without any ſpecial Preparation for it, than the other can be, how much time ſoever he ſets apart in Order to his Receiving. His comeing to the Sacrament would not be like the Diſciples of our Lord who had left all to follow him, and did by this Ordinance engage themſelves to live and dye in the Faith, and in Obedience to his Commandments; but like the Whore which *Solomon* ſpeaks of, who ſaid, *I have paid my Vows, therefore*

*therefore came I forth to meet thee*, &c. Prov. 7. 14, 15. Some are ſo diſſolute as to think, that having Received the Sacrament, and ſpent ſome time to put themſelves into a good mood in Order to it, they ſhall eaſily obtain a Pardon for the time to come, having made even with God for the time paſt. But as the Whore was a Whore ſtill for all her Vows, ſo this Wicked man remains a Wicked man ſtill, notwithſtanding his Preparation and Communicating, *And his Sacrifice* was *an Abomination to the Lord.* It is not enough for a man to ſay, I muſt not ſin this Week, but avoid Temptations, becauſe I intend to Receive the Sacrament; but I muſt change the habit of my Mind, I muſt become a New Creature, I muſt reſolve, that becauſe *I have done Iniquity, I will do no more*, or elſe all the Preparation that can be made will ſignify nothing. There is a great difference in the Deſign of theſe Communicants. He that is Religi-

Religious in the General course of his Life, comes to the Sacrament that he may be kept from sin for the time to come. He that is only Religious in Order to his Receiving, comes to it that he may sin again with less regret of mind than he did before. The First is one who desires that Christ may dwell in his heart, and bear rule in him: The Other is one of those who now and then gives God an unwellcome Visit, and then returns to dwell with his sins again. He must needs be an Unworthy Communicant, that comes to the Sacrament that he may with the greater freedom serve his sin after it. Tis not any particular Preparation, how much time so ever any one hath for it, that bespeaks a man to be a Worthy Communicant, if he be not heartily resolv'd to become a good man.

2. There is no Time prefixed for preparation to Communicate, but men are left to the grace of the Gospel and of the New Covenant. We read in

in the Old Teſtament of a ſpecial Time which God appointed for Preparation, when the People were to make their ſolemn approaches to him: When God appointed the People to meet him upon the Mount he required two Dayes preparation, *Exod.*19.15. When God ſent a Summons to the Seventy Elders to appear before him, he required a Dayes preparation. *Say unto the People, Sanctifie your ſelves againſt to Morrow*; & more Inſtances might be given. But under the Goſpel God accepts the Will for the deed. He that would ſpend time if it were his own, in a ſolemn Preparation for the Sacrament, is as welcome to God as if he had really ſpent ſo much time in order to his Receiving. Where Time is wanting, there may be, and doubtleſs is a ſupply from the grace of God. *Solomon* ſaith, *Prov.* 16. 1. *The preparation of the heart is from the Lord.* And it is not to be doubted, but through the Grace of God, thoſe who have but little time to prepare, do receive as much

much to their comfort, and find as great benefit by it as thoſe who have ſpent more time in Preparation for it.

I know that ſome very Pious Miniſters have ſo much inſiſted upon the ſpending of ſome conſiderable Time as preparatory to the Sacrament, that they have diſcouraged many good Chriſtians from coming to it, who have not had time from their unavoidable Occaſions, to prepare themſelves for it. I will readily grant, that it is of great Concern, that thoſe who intend to Communicate ſhould ſpend Time in preparing themſelves, and the more they ſpend the more Comfort and Satisfaction it is to them: But this muſt not diſcourage Servants and others from Communicating who want time, and whoſe time is not properly their own. The Scripture hath given no Standard in this caſe; and from thence it is that ſome very pious Chriſtians from an humble Senſe of their Unworthyneſs and Unfitneſs to receive, think they

they have not ſpent Time enough in preparing, and therefore they will ſtay till the next Communion; and when that comes they ſtill think they have not ſpent Time enough; and by this means the moſt Worthy gueſts are kept from the Lords Supper. I would have ſuch perſons, and all that are pious and devout Chriſtians, to conſider the caſe of the *Corinthians* before mentioned. They had Received Unworthily and thereby provoked God to Anger: The Apoſtle admoniſhes them to *Examine* themſelves before they received again, but he doth not preſcribe any Time that they ſhould ſpend, nor doth he tell them that it would be Convenient for them to forbear coming to the Sacrament for ſome time; But *let a man examine himſelf, and ſo let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup*; when 'tis probable there was to be a Communion the next day.

3. It is poſſible that men in this caſe of Preparation may be over Righteous,

ous, nay it is poſſible they may be Superſtitious too. They are over-Righteous who ſpend that time in preparation for the Sacrament, which they cannot ſpare from neceſſary Occaſions. If the Poor man neglects his family, or the Servant his Maſters buſineſs, though it be for the ſake of the Sacrament; God may ſay to them, *who hath required this at your hands?*

Some may be Superſtitious in their Preparations: Such as think they ſhall be accepted of God according to the number of Meals which they have abſtained from; Or the Hours they have ſpent in Reading, Prayer or Meditation. Whereas, as to the firſt, Abſtinence in it ſelf ſignifies nothing. It is only to be uſed ſo far as it may keep the mind from being indiſpoſed for that which is good. And to ſome perſons their Conſtitutions cannot bear faſting, and if they abſtain they are more indiſpoſed than if they continue their wonted Meals. And by numbring the Hours or Prayers (as Papiſts do)

do) a man may place Religion wrong, and all that he doth in his Religious Service may be without that Devotion of mind, which alone is acceptable to God and preparatory to this holy Ordinance.

Let men take heed that they miſtake not; & ſet bounds & meaſures where God hath ſet none. Let them not think, that unleſs they had ſo much Time for Preparation, God will not accept of them, for God hath made no ſuch appointments. Tis not Time allowed that is of abſolute neceſſity, but a ſincere Deſire and endeavour to obey the commands of our Saviour that makes a man a Worthy Communicant.

4. Let him that complains of the Want of Time take heed, that he doth not neglect that time he hath or may have to ſpend in preparing for the Sacrament. What man is there in the World who for ſome additional Advantages would not find time to ſpare from his neceſſary occaſions? There are many who will work harder than ordi-

ordinary for the ſake of a little Liberty: Others to gain ſome Profit and Advantage to themſelves. Surely ſuch perſons, if they have a deſire to walk in the pleaſant wayes of Religion, may make haſt to diſpatch their buſineſs, that they may have a little time to Examine themſelves, to bethink themſelves of the State of their minds, and how the great affaires ſtand between God and their own Souls. They may find time to conſider what Sins they have to repent of, and heartily to begg Gods grace that they may eſcape them for the time to come, and if they do ſo they are Worthy Communicants, though they have had but little time for the diſpatch of theſe great Concerns.

I cannot think there is any man ſo employed but he may find time in the Morning & Evening to pray to God, & if he cannot make it a ſet Duty, & be alone, and be undiſturbed; Yet there may be Fervent Ejaculations, by which he may lift up his heart to God, which God will hear and have a ſpeciall re-

gard to: And by the Use of them his mind will be kept in such a Religious Frame and Temper, that he will be a Worthy Communicant, and a welcome Guest at the Lords Table.

5. Let those who make this Excuse, that they want time to prepare, consider the ill consequences of Neglecting the Sacrament. They that complain they want Time to prepare for the Sacrament, find time enough to commit those sins which make them unfit for that or any other Religious Duties. Whatever business they have to do, they find time to harden their hearts against God and against Religion, so that no impressions of Good may be made in them. He that at first thought he might not come, because he wanted Time to prepare, will afterwards refuse to come, though he hath more time than he knows what to do with. Nay, he will rather throw it away, and his Soul with it, by spending it in the Service of the Devil, than in preparing, that he may be a Worthy Communicant. There

There is another Pretence for Unpreparedneſs, and that is the Temptations which attend the diſpatch of neceſſary buſineſs. Men ſay they are forced to converſe with ſinful men, and are unavoidably betrayed to that which is Evil, and therefore it is in Vain for them to think of Preparing for the Sacrament. I deſire ſuch to conſider.

1. It may be they complain without a Cauſe, and that in diſpatch of their buſineſs, they are not Tempted to that which is really Evil. It may be this man thinks, that he cannot Prepare becauſe his buſineſs will unhinge the Devotion of his mind, and put it out of that Religious Frame and Temper which he would keep it in, if he intended to partake. He thinks that a man may not Receive the Sacrament, unleſs he can for ſome time keep his mind ſo free from ſuch Incumbrances, as not to have a Thought of worldly Buſineſs entertain'd by him. There is no Reaſon

why this ſhould hinder his Receiving. The lawful Diſpatch of Worldly buſineſs muſt not hinder men from the Sacrament, nor muſt the Sacrament hinder men from the diſpatch of Worldly buſineſs. *We have no ſuch Rule.* If a man ſpends that time with his Cuſtomers, which he intended to ſpend with God in ſecret Devotion, and there hath been Innocent Mirth, this is no Offence to God, only it is Adviſeable that at his return he reduce his mind to Seriouſneſs and Devotion in order to his Receiving, and then he needs not fear but he ſhall be welcome at the Lords Table.

2. If in the Diſpatch of buſineſs men do that which is really evil: If they defraud, or if they are guilty of Drunkeneſs (which is become ſuch a Concomitant with Trade, that there are a great many whom the Devil will not ſuffer to diſpatch their Buſineſs with their Cuſtomers, unleſs they diſpatch their buſineſs with him at the ſame time) and it happens ſome dayes before

fore the Sacrament; Let him repent and humble his ſoul to God, to think that he hath forgotten God and his own Soul at that time when he ſhould have prepared for the Bleſſed Sacrament. And if he be ſincerely Penitent he need not omit it. Nay, he hath the more need to receive it, by how much he ſees how prone he is to fall into Temptations, that he may be kept from them. And if this hath happened a little before the Sacrament, and ſo neer to it that he cannot be ſatisfied of his Repentance, ſo as to come to the Sacrament the next time of Adminiſtration, let him go to his Miniſter, and bewail the Cauſe of his not Receiving: Let him think how happy they are that are Worthy Communicants, and what a ſad thing it is that he ſhould do that, for the ſake of which he dare not appear at the Lords Table. But if this be the Caſe, that he hath Neglected to Receive, and hopes that this will excuſe him; if he be not in the ſnare of the Devil,

and under the Dominion of Sin, I am ſure no man in the World is. He may as well ſpeak plainly, and ſay, I love my ſin better than the Sacrament, and Sinful Companions better than Pious Communicants. And I ſuppoſe theſe are the men, as well as others, who keep from the Sacrament to avoid Damnation.

3. If Worldly Buſineſs brings men into ill Company, and is the Occaſion of Sin, let them make haſt to diſpatch it, and tell the company that they are to Communicate. Our Saviour ſaid, *If any ſhall be aſhamed of me before men, of him will I be aſhamed before my Father.* He doubtleſs ſpake it in reference to the Deriſion with which *Jews* and *Heathens* thought to make men aſhamed of Chriſtianity (which was the reaſon of the Croſs in Baptiſm:) But in Our age we had need make uſe of it to encourage one Chriſtian, whom another derides for obſerving the Inſtitutions of our Saviour. If there be any that are ſo aſham'd of Chriſt and his Ordinance, that they will rather

go

go on to commit ſin for Company ſake than give ſuch a reaſon; they are Unworthy indeed: For it appears plainly, that they are aſhamed of the Sacrament, but not of their Sin. The Sacrament was appointed to keep men from ſin, but if they may not both be entertain'd, the Sacrament muſt keep off.

4. Let theſe Perſons conſider what manifeſt Contempt they caſt upon all other Ordinances of Chriſt. They can go to Prayers and Sermons all the year long, and it ſignifies nothing; but they can go to their ſinful Companions all the week after, and it may be on the Lords day as ſoon as the Publick Service is done; as if it were in Defiance of thoſe little things of Religion. They can confeſs their ſins, and, inſtead of forſaking, run to them as ſoon as they have done. They can pray to the Great King of Heaven for Pardon, and make haſte to Rebel again. They can hear what the great God commands, and what he promiſes, and

what he threatens, but it all ſignifies nothing to them. *Pharaoh* and *Ahab* regarded more what Miniſters ſaid, than they do. 'Tis only the Sacrament that they are afraid of, becauſe they have ſome Guilt and Fear which will not ſuffer them to make that approach to God, which they think is nearer and more Solemn. This ſhews the Caſe of the ſinner to be very deſperate. It appears plainly that he is reſolved to live a ſinful Life, and that he will not have to do with Religion any farther than it ſhall leave him Irreligious. Praying and Hearing are weak things which his Sin keeps under, and doth not ſuffer them to prevail to the ſubduing of it; and becauſe he looks upon the Sacrament to be of greater force, therefore he will not come at it.

5. If this be the Caſe of the ſinner 'tis never like to be otherwiſe. This man doth not intend to leave his Trade, and therefore he intends not to Communicate.

6. Let all Perſons conſider that the more

more worldly Buſineſs any one hath, the more neceſſary it is that he ſhould be a frequent Communicant. I mention this, becauſe many think that they who have moſt Leiſure from worldly buſineſs ought to be moſt frequent Communicants, and that it cannot be expected from thoſe that have many or great Concerns. This ſuppoſeth that the Sacrament is only an Ordinance which was appointed, that Chriſtians ſhould pay their reſpects and acknowledgments to Chriſt by it, and not that it is appointed alſo for the good of mens Souls, and to keep up in them a quick Senſe of the Love of Chriſt to them, and to preſerve them from the Power of Temptations, which hinders the growth of Grace and Piety. The Rich man or the man that hath many Worldly Concerns ſhould ſay: "I have more need to "frequent the Sacrament than others. "I am in great danger of loving the "World more than Chriſt, and he "hath declared that he will not ac-

"count

"count such to be *Worthy of him.* I "am in more Danger, than others, of "my heart being stolen away from "God, and therefore I will frequent "that Ordinance, that my Riches or "the Desire of them may not ruine me. He that pleads Business and neglects the Sacrament, doth plainly declare that the World is uppermost in his esteem, and that the Sacrament must not be regarded, but when the World will give way to it.

To Conclude this; Let me tell every such Pretender, that he casts a most manifest slight and Contempt upon the Sacrament. If the King should send for him, and he were afraid of his displeasure, neither Business nor Company must hinder, but that Christ commands his attendance is a little thing to him. If any news were brought to him of an Estate or Legacy, or any great Worldly advantage, business and company must give way; but the Sacrament is only the concern of his Soul, and therefore it may be let alone.

3. There

3. There is another general Pretence, and that is the danger of Relapsing. There are many who would receive the Sacrament, but they are afraid they should fall into sin again. Let such Persons consider,

1. Their Case is very dangerous whilst they neglect it. It is the Spiritual Food of the Soul. Men do not forbear their nourishment for fear it should breed diseases. It is the Souls Physick to purge away sin. Men do not refuse a *Remedy* for fear of a *Relapse*. He that pleads this doth not consider the Necessity of Communicating, but only the Danger which may be to him that Receives.

2. It is not expected that any can wholly avoid Temptations to sin after they have receiv'd, but that they should be the more careful to avoid them. And that they should not allow themselves in them, but repent and amend. If men could be so holy as this Pretence supposeth, no man should need to receive above once. But the Sacrament is appointed to be a continued Means by

by which men are more and more enabled againſt their Corruptions, which ſuppoſeth a continued Conteſt, but not an abſolute Victory. Every man may reſolve, that he will for the time to come ſtrive againſt his ſin, and whenſoever his Conſcience accuſeth him of ſinful Compliances, that he will repent and begg Gods Pardon: and Gods Grace to withſtand it for the time to come; and this every man muſt do that expects Salvation, tho he were not required to receive the Sacrament; and if he do ſo, he is a Worthy Communicant.

3. Thoſe that enter upon a Religious Life, and reſolve to come to the Sacrament, upon ſerious debates, have no cauſe to be Diſcouraged by the fear of Relapſes. If indeed a man comes to the Sacrament upon a ſudden Fit, in hope that it will remove ſome particular Trouble from him, and ſo make it an Experiment only, and ſin after he hath Received; this is no Relapſe into Sin, for he never

never came off from it. But thoſe who from a ſerious conſideration of their Duty, and of their danger whilſt they Neglect their Duty for the ſake of their Sin, do reſolve to enter into a new courſe of Life, and with ſerious Reſolutions and hearty Prayers for Gods Grace and Bleſſing, come to the Sacrament, they need not fear but they ſhall perſevere in the wayes of Religion. For 1. The Grace of God will not be wanting to them. 2. Thoſe Arguments which induced them to be Religious, will continue & be of no leſs force for their Perſeverance in the Practice of Religion. Such a man cannot ſay, that when he began to be Religious he did not well conſider to what end he ſhould be ſo, and therefore upon ſecond thoughts he finds it beſt to go back again. 3. The Pleaſure of Religion will continue and encreaſe. No man hath cauſe to ſay, 'tis ſuch an uncouth and unpleaſant thing to be Religious that I had better leave it off: He cannot ſay the Non-Communicant who

who ſlights Religion, and avoids the thoughts of his own condition, hath more pleaſure in his mind than he that *Examines himſelf, & ſo eats of that Bread, and Drinks of that Cup.* Theſe things conſidered, there is no ſuch danger of Relapſing as the Non-Communicant is afraid of. 4. The good Succeſs of Communicating ſhews that there is no ſuch great danger. It may be ſaid indeed, that there are ſome who are Communicants who live ſinful Lives, but this is no reaſon why any ſhould keep from the Sacrament for fear of relapſing into ſuch practices; Becauſe 'tis too probable that ſuch Perſons receive the Sacrament, chiefly from their regard to the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, and becauſe it is the Duty of every Chriſtian, and not that they may be the more Holy and Religious. This is a great Reaſon why you ſhould Communicate from Principles of true Piety, but no reaſon why you ſhould fear relapſing, becauſe they never relapſed but are the ſame that ever they were.

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He that ſuggeſts this to keep men from the Sacrament, knowes the contrary. If there were ſuch a Probability of revolting from God, he would not be ſo buſie to keep men from engaging themſelves to him. Where there is one ſinner that periſheth by returning to ſin, there are thouſands that periſh becauſe they never began to be Religious.

Theſe are the Pretences by which men turn their backs upon their Saviour. By theſe do men gratify the great Enemy of their Salvation. Theſe are his *Devices* by which he gets *Advantage* againſt men. By theſe he cheats men of the greateſt Pleaſures in this Life, and of *Pleaſures for ever more* in the Life to come.

God of his Infinite Mercy grant, that Non-Communicants may conſider of it, how much they have Neglected their Duty and their Benefit: What Diſhonour they have occaſioned to the Chriſtian Religion, and What Deſtruction they are bringing to themſelves, whileſt they fooliſhly think

think they are avoiding it. There never was a Pretence, nor ever shall be, that will serve a mans turn for the Neglect of his duty. God hath made the way plain before every man, and if he turns out of it, 'tis because he is resolved he will not walk in it. The Sacrament is a very cheap and not a costly Sacrifice. No man is the Poorer, but every man may be the Richer for it. God requires nothing of any man in order to his Observance of it but what he may do, and if he neglects to *do this in Remembrance* of his Saviour, he cannot expect to be remembred by him in his Heavenly Kingdom.

*FINIS.*